The problem of interpretation of the self in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, Shklovsky's Zoo, or Letters Not about love, and The three Marias' The New Portuguese Letters

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Abstract

In this thesis, I discuss the problem of interpretation of the self in the epistolary text, The Letters of Abelard and Heloise (1132-35), Shklovsky's Zoo, or Letters Not about Love (1924) and the three Marias' The New Portuguese Letters (1972). Since the desire of knowing the deeper nature of a person is still popular, there are many studies of the self which are expected to reveal the "truth" of human being. The atmosphere of privacy in an epistolary text often incites the reader's desire for the revelation of the writer's self. Yet the three texts I discuss invite as well as defy such an expectation.

Although The Letters of Abelard and Heloise is considered as a collection of letters, which leads the reader to expect the "truth", the process of manipulation over a long period of time in the text indicates that the expectation of the "true" self in the text is in vain. In the second chapter, I show how the intertextual nature of the text and the self in Zoo makes it impossible for the reader to define the writer's self. In The New Portuguese Letters, I discuss how the three Marias' attempt of reconstituting a "true" and "original" woman's self creates some contradictions as they question their own perception of the self.

Like the Marias' writing, my own writing ends up in an unending paradox. While I write about the problem of interpretation in the epistolary text, my writing cannot avoid some problems either. My writing is also subjected to many modifications which distort the "truth" in it. So, while talking about the problem of interpretation in the epistolary text, my writing is no more than an interpretation of the problem.

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Introduction

The word "self" according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary means: "1. a person's or thing's own individuality or essence *(showed his true self).* 2. a person or thing as the object of introspection or reflexive action *(the consciousness of self)".* According to the first definition, the word self implies the "truth" of human nature. In addition, the word "essence" insinuates the possibility of the self being defined. The words "introspection" and "reflexive action" in the second definition indicate something deeper than what it appears (to be introspective, according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary, means to "look inward"). Accordingly, the study of the self often involves the interpretation of the external signs which will reveal the "true" human hidden inner nature.

The "hidden inner nature" of a person is often expected to be found in his/her writing. Besides diaries, memoirs and autobiography, epistolarity is one form of writing which is expected to offer a revelation of the self. Since it is written in the first person, an epistolary text gives the impression of immediacy and a direct sense of the writer.

Another impression created by an epistolary text is the impression of privacy. This impression is given by the writer's separation and isolation. Separated from Abelard and isolated in the nunnery world, Heloise begins writing to Abelard in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise. Another example is Mariana, who is enclosed in a monastery when writing about her passion for the cavalier in The Portuguese Letters. This impression incites the reader to consider letter writing as the mirror of the writer's self:

the reader will expect that being in solitude, the letter writer will open up the deepest of his/her feelings and thoughts and thus ensure the authenticity of his/her writing.

Is it possible, though, to define someone's self, to reach the truth and the fundamental nature of the letter writer in the epistolary text? In The Letters of Abelard and Heloise (1132-35), Shklovsky's Zoo, or Letters Not about Love (1924), and The New Portuguese Letters (1972), I will show that the attempt to reach the "truth" of the self in the epistolary text meets many problems. All the three texts I have chosen encourage the reader's expectation that the "truth" or the "real" selves of the writers will be revealed, but at the same time defy such an expectation.

In the oldest text I will discuss, The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, doubt about the authenticity of the self revealed through letters is due mainly to the inadequacy of the historical record: the "truth" of the self represented in the letter is lost in time. However, a close reading of the text implies that the writers of the letters use a strategy that is also central to Zoo and The New Portuguese Letters: the writers of the letters manipulate the historical record with representations of the selves for their own purposes. These factors show that the hope of defining the self of the letter writer in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise is in vain.

In Zoo, Shklovsky deliberately undermines the reader's expectation of the "truth" in his epistolary text. Applying his theory of defamiliarization in the text, Shklovsky emphasizes the fragmented nature of the self and the text: the text as well as the self are in an unending process of intertextuality with other texts and selves. As a consequence, Zoo challenges the dictionary definition of the self having "essence", and presents the possibility

that "introspection" and "reflexive action" do not reveal a "true" self.

While people try to reveal the inner "truth" of the other, they finally have to come to the question of the inner "truth" of their own perception. This problem is raised in the third chapter in The New Portuguese Letters, written by Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta, and Maria Velho da Costa. With The New Portuguese Letters, the three women meet and start having a conversation about their project of writing an epistolary novel together. These writers are concerned with the political and social oppression of women (especially by men), which has been manipulating woman's self. The text implies the three Marias' desire to get rid of such a manipulation. However, this desire is frustrated.

This thesis in itself creates another problem: since our perception is unreliable, how can we analyze anything? The discussion of the problem of interpretation of the self thus leads to a paradoxical conclusion. Since my perception is unreliable, my argument of the unreliability of the perception becomes unreliable as well.

Chapter I. The Process of manipulation in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise.

Many people consider that deciding on the "truth" and "authenticity" is important in interpreting the self in letter writing. The search for a description of real and authentic people in the text is mostly aroused by the desire to identify. The different terms "Collection of letters" and "Epistolary fiction" create a gap between "real" and fictive letters. A collection of letters is expected to present fact and real selves.

Nevertheless, a collection of letters can be subjected to forgery and manipulation, that is, the letters become more or less fictive. In Heloise's and Abelard's time, letters by famous people were frequently published. Because of this, fictional letters were often written under the name of famous people simply in order to be published. A collection of letters therefore can become full of thefts, manipulation and conspiracies, which distort the truth. Consequently, the desire for representation of the real self in the text becomes problematical.

Distortion, though, is not caused only by thefts or professional forgers. In medieval times, the letters of religious leaders (such as the bishop or abbot) were frequently written by a secretary[1]. Sometimes the author gave only the summary of the content and the secretary had to design the wording of the letters. This means that the secretary encoded the idea in his own representation of it. Accordingly, wittingly or

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[1] . This information is from D.W. Robertson's Abelard and Heloise. New York: Dial Press, 1972.

unwittingly, this transformation could distort the author's intention. Furthermore, when letters are collected, the editors will edit, select and revise them. Consequently, after such a process, the letters might have undergone many changes. Most of the letters are translated and thus encoded in the translator's language and point of view. This process adds another distortion to the letters, evident from differences between translations of the same text.

Another manipulator of the epistolary collection is the "real" author him/herself. The author can dissimulate and even manipulate him/herself in the writing. For this reason, writing creates the portrait as well as the masquerade of the author. Moreover, since the meaning of language is never absolutely fixed, the reader can further distort the author's intention. This makes the judgement of the self in a collection of letters problematical, both in terms of whether or not the reader's expectations can be fulfilled, and also because the reader's expectations can themselves produce a distorted reading.

The Letters of Abelard and Heloise has undergone these distortions as well. Abelard and Heloise met and became lovers between 1117 and 1119. In 1119, Heloise had a son called Astrolabe, and Abelard was castrated at Fulbert's command. Heloise then became a nun, and Abelard a monk. "Historia calamitatum" was written by Abelard to console one of his friends after he became a monk. Prompted by "Historia", Heloise began a personal correspondence with Abelard. The Letters of Abelard and Heloise consists of "Historia calamitatum" (the letter of Abelard to his friend), four personal letters and two letters of direction between Heloise and Abelard, and the letters of Peter the Venerable and Heloise.

For years, the letters have been the subject of speculation as to whether they are fact or fiction, with the focus on the correspondence rather than Abelard's "Historia calamitatum". Suppose the letters were written by Abelard and Heloise themselves, how can they reveal the writers' selves? How "real" are they? Even if Heloise and Abelard wrote the letters, it does not mean that what they wrote portrays their real selves. They can be as manipulative as forgers.

The formal letter or epistle was a popular form in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Letters written by important people or religious leaders often became the source for doctrines and directions. Consequently, the letters were often authoritative and instructive. The popular models for epistles at that time were those of St. Augustine and St. Jerome. In their letters, they talk about themselves to give examples for their doctrine, so that the form of the letters often becomes autobiographical. Therefore, even if the "real" author writes about his/her own self, the public eye may take an important part in shaping that description. Some letters in that period, according to Robertson, "might not be actual letters at all, but were instead exercises in exposition on a certain topic or problem, or merely a series of appropriate observations addressed to a person of a certain type" (Robertson, 1972; 121).

As a result, Heloise's and Abelard's correspondence is not free from modification. What makes it more complicated is that the "original" manuscript in Latin is lost. What remains are only the copies of the letters, which vary slightly from one to the other. The problem of authenticity in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise becomes unresolvable as the text is translated into other languages, producing inevitable variations in meaning.

Historia calamitatum.

The authenticity of "Historia" is not as doubtful as that of the other letters in the text. According to D.W. Robertson,Jr., the letters of Fulk of Deuil, Roscelin, Peter the Venerable and other letters addressed to Heloise and Abelard outside the text show that the story Abelard wrote in "Historia" has "a basis in fact" (Robertson, 1972; 100). This "basis in fact" increases the reader's expectation of finding the real self in the text. Nonetheless, the factual basis in "Historia" may be merely "the fact" which is socially-approved. In other words, the fact is also made up.

In "Historia", Abelard writes about his life from his birth, including his education, his brilliant career as a philosopher, his affair with Heloise, his fall and finally his and Heloise's entry to religious institutions. Consequently, "Historia" more or less resembles an autobiography. While reading an autobiography, usually readers will search for the writer's self: the "I" in the text and the writer are assumed to be the same and also "real". However, readers do not actually see who Abelard is, instead they interpret "an Abelard" who has been represented by Abelard. Autobiography, P.M. Spacks explains, "provides opportunities for reshaping experience closer to the heart's desire" (Spacks, 1976; 81). So, the reader's judgement of Abelard's self is directed by Abelard.

In writing an autobiography, the writer does not write the past but the memory of the past. This makes a discrepancy between the past and writing about it. The past is written in a certain span of time and writing length. "Historia calamitatum" becomes the means of serving some special socio-political purposes at a certain time. Thus, Abelard's religious self in the "Historia calamitatum" is not Abelard's self but a textual version of himself. The textual version of one's self in autobiography is highly influenced by the writer's ideological position,

that is, when, where and why the writer writes what he does. Abelard writes his "autobiography" at the time and in the place where religion plays a very important part in his life. At that time, sexual passion was considered to be much more debased than today. Abelard's intention of making himself seem religious and resolute in the "Historia calamitatum" might be caused by his desire to restore his position in life. This becomes one of the problems for the reader in trying to define Abelard's "true" self from his writing.

Although Abelard was not a monk, his position as a philosopher required him to practise celibacy. His past scandal with Heloise marred his reputation and so marred his career. What made his downfall worse was that before the castration, Abelard was known as a brilliant and an arrogant philosopher. His success and arrogance invited the hatred of many of his rivals, who after the scandal had more opportunity to ruin his career. In order to save his reputation, Abelard had to attract sympathy from the public and justify himself in their eyes. One way of doing this was to make the public think that he had changed, that he was resolute about his monastic life. As a master of letters, whose writings were often published, Abelard must have realized the effect of letter writing on the public at that time. His making copies of the "Historia calamitatum" shows Abelard's intention that his letter be published.

Since it was for the public, and since the possible intention of the letter was to gain public sympathy and recover his reputation, of course Abelard would try not to oppose the prejudices of society. Abelard might have also wanted to soothe the public by condemning his past self. Calling his affair with Heloise "lust" and "sin" in "Historia", he shows his repentance to the society of his day. Hence, for Abelard, speaking about "the facts" becomes an important element in "Historia"

to show that his repentance is sincere. "The facts" here may be merely the considered "truth" of the society of that period. This can be the reason that many letters outside the collections, as Robertson points out, show that "Historia" has "a basis in fact".

Another problem which shows the difficulty of knowing Abelard's "real" self is his use of some literary devices such as satire. The use of literary devices shows that Abelard's description of himself is a result of modification and re-production. To gain the public's sympathy, all of these devices were carefully chosen to be socially correct. At this period, the targets of mockery were vanity, hypocrisy, lust or avarice (Robertson, 1972; 111). Trying to compromise with current social views, Abelard mocks his past self which, according to "Historia", was hypocritical, lustful and arrogant.

Renouncing "the glory of a soldier's life" and making over his "inheritance and rights of the eldest son" to his brothers (58), Abelard pursues a completely different occupation: as a philosopher. Nevertheless, he writes that this occupation makes him pursue another kind of "glory". Abelard mocks himself by picturing his ambition as withdrawing from "the court of Mars in order to kneel at the feet of Minerva" (58). He sneers at the haughtiness he displayed in establishing his school at Melun: "young as I was and estimating my capacity too highly for my years; . . . I had my eyes on a site suited to my purpose - Melun" (59).

According to "Historia", one of his rivals was his former teacher, William of Champeaux, who had a supreme reputation as a philosopher and a much higher position in the Church than Abelard. Continuing his war in dialectic, Abelard transferred his school from Melun to Corbeil, a town near Paris, so that "I could embarrass him through more frequent encounters in disputation" (59). Later, William

became Bishop of Chalons, whereas Abelard merely retreated to Le Pallet. In his rivalry with William of Champeux, though, Abelard still felt predominant. This arrogance is shown when he quotes Ovid's Metamorphoses. In this story, Ajax, who was well-known as a braggart soldier, boasted in his contest with Ulysses:

> If you demand the issue of this fight,
> I was not vanquished by my enemy (62).

Nevertheless, Ajax had an insulting loss. His arms were awarded to Ulysses and Ajax killed himself. Abelard ridicules his earlier self's assurance of his ability by comparing himself to Ajax. His earlier self becomes no more than a defeated soldier in his arrogance.

After he apologized to Fulbert for his affair with Heloise, Abelard and Fulbert made an agreement about Abelard and Heloise's marriage: Abelard would marry Heloise but Fulbert had to promise to keep the marriage secret. Fulbert agreed: he "sealed the reconciliation I desired with a kiss" (70). This kiss, though, is no more than Judas's kiss: "But his intention was to make it easier to betray me" (70). The comparison becomes ridiculous as Abelard cannot be compared with Jesus since he himself has betrayed Fulbert. Accordingly, this Judas (Fulbert) betrays another Judas (Abelard). By ridiculing his past self, Abelard suggests that he can criticize his former vices and is now wiser.

It is also probable that Abelard has read St. Augustine's Confessions, since St. Augustine's books had some important influence to the church at that time. St. Augustine's Confessions is more or less like Abelard's "Historia". In this book, St. Augustine describes his life. St. Augustine was involved in a lustful and avaricious existence in his youth. But later, he leads a celibate life in order to dedicate himself to religion. By the time he wrote Confessions, St. Augustine was climbing to a more and more important position in the church, and therefore

needed to provide a good example for the public. The popularity of St. Augustine's Confessions shows the public acceptance of the text. Abelard is in a more or less similar position as St. Augustine. Following what St. Augustine has done in shaping Confessions can be a good strategy for Abelard to win the heart of the public. This shows that the description of Abelard's self in "Historia" is made to serve a special purpose. The expected privacy in letter writing, in this case, is distorted since the public eye is present in Abelard's writing and modifies his representation of himself. The reader's search for a "real" self becomes futile.

Furthermore, Abelard's letter addressed to his friend was probably intended for the Paraclete, too (Robertson, 1972; 110). After Heloise's and Abelard's entry into religious institutions, Abelard became the founder of Heloise's Paraclete. Abelard's position as the founder of Heloise's Paraclete obliges him visit Heloise and remain in contact with her quite often to give religious directions and rules, and prepare the prayers and hymns for Heloise's nunnery. This might cause a malicious rumour considering their previous relationship. As the founder, Abelard needs respect from the nuns, and rumour could make it difficult for him to provide directions and rules. To prevent this, Abelard has to impress on the nuns that he as well as Heloise were once tempted by lust but then converted to religion. In this way, the nuns will think that he had already reformed when he founded Heloise's abbey and his intention is innocent. Consequently, Abelard's account of his life cannot be totally factual. His revelation of himself is biased as his writing cannot avoid the process of modification and thus becomes manipulated.

Another way Abelard tries to impress the society of his day is by referring to the Bible in his writing. As he is an abbot, Abelard's

references to the Bible become a socially and religiously correct element in his writing. Therefore, in his letter, the events in his life are seen in relation to Christianity and the Bible. However, the Bible, which is considered by Christians to contain the truth, is encoded by Abelard's point of view. The Bible's "Thy [God's] will be done", for example, is modified by Abelard: what is considered to be God's will and what is not is decided from Abelard's point of view, which of course is influenced by the society of that period. God's will, according to Abelard, includes his physical injuries and suffering but excludes his sexual desire. Abelard's castration is interpreted as God's grace and glory to free him from lust. On the other hand, his affair with Heloise is not God's will but evil's, and is a sin. Knowledge, which brought him success, is now seen as the source of his misery as he quotes the words of the Apostle: "Knowledge breeds conceit" (65).

When he talks to Fulbert, the downfall of Adam and some other men in the Bible is used by Abelard to justify himself in his affair with Heloise: "I protested that I had done nothing unusual in the eyes of anyone who had known the power of love, and recalled how since the beginning of the human race women had brought the noblest men to ruin" (70). Based on that example, Abelard makes generalizations about women and implies that their affair was more or less caused by Heloise. So, Abelard's text is influenced by the Bible, but this Biblical perspective is also modified by Abelard's view. The truth in his letter becomes a modified "truth". In parallel, his revelation of himself becomes modified as well.

While Abelard tried to give a certain impression of himself to the reader, nevertheless, Abelard's writing is not free from the transformation of interpretation. This situation is explained by Mikhail Bakhtin as he states that discourse lives "on the boundary between its

own context and another, alien, context" (Bakhtin, 1981; 284). Being read, Abelard's text comes to an alien context: the belief system of the reader. In Abelard's time, his writing might have been received sympathetically and seemed more appropriate. Nowadays, values have changed. Religious self is no longer of general interest. The repetitive mention of obedience to God and the Bible will even sound hypocritical, and sexual passion is now seen as natural rather than degraded.

Rather than viewing Heloise as an intelligent scholar and Abelard as a philosopher and religious leader, most people think of them as a passionate couple "as famous as Dante and Beatrice or Romeo and Juliet" (Introduction, p.9). The judgement of Abelard's self in his letter undergoes many transformations as well. Abelard's coldness about his past affair disappoints many contemporary readers. As a consequence, they condemn Abelard's behaviour and sympathize with Heloise more. One translator of the text, Betty Radice, is quite cynical about Abelard's description of his suffering: Abelard "is so vague when writing about his continued dangers and apprehensions of further charges of heresy that one wonders if he was developing *a persecution complex* [my italics]" (Radice, 1974; 21). Instead of sympathizing with Abelard's torment, Radice states that it is only the result of his mental disorder.

Besides, the issue of the oppression of women is now given more consideration than in Abelard's time. While women's sacrifice for men was considered to be an obligation and more "normal" at that time; nowadays, such obligation and normality are questioned by some. For this reason, modern critics, like Peggy Kamuf, Linda S. Kauffman and Betty Radice give a negative impression of Abelard. They imply that Heloise's submissiveness and willingness to sacrifice herself are the result of Abelard's selfishness. Betty Radice writes: "Abelard relates the opening stages of the story as a calculated seduction on his part,

confident as he was of easy success, and there is never anything romantic or idealistic about his attitude to sexual love" (15). Peggy Kamuf also writes that "Abelard's plan to seduce his student was almost assured from the start" (Kamuf, 1982; 2).

In addition, Kauffman states: "Many forms of tyranny precede the beginning of the correspondence" (Kauffman, 1986; 65). Given the authority by Fulbert "to punish as well as to teach" Heloise (67), Abelard makes this authority as a form of sex play with her. From Kauffman's point of view, Abelard forced Heloise "with threats and blows when she resisted him" (Kauffman, 1986; 65). About this, Peggy Kamuf comments that Fulbert's order to beat Heloise is used by Abelard to have "another function as well within the erotic context" (Kamuf, 1987; 3). According to Kamuf, this becomes a "violence" which is "very close to rape" (Kamuf, 1987; 3).

Some other antagonistic impressions of Abelard arise because in "Historia" he mentions asking Heloise to become a nun before he becomes a monk: "Heloise had already agreed to take the veil in obedience to my wishes and entered the convent" (76). Radice's comment on Abelard's statement emphasizes Abelard's selfishness and Heloise's sacrifice: Heloise "had taken them [the vows] at his command and with no sense of vocation, as Abelard very well knew" (Radice, 1974; 22).

All of these negative comments, however, are mostly based on Abelard's description of himself. Kauffman states: "these tyrannies are revealed in Abelard's *Historia calamitatum* " (Kauffman, 1986; 65). As discussed previously, the truth of "Historia" is ambiguous. The critics' account, in parallel, is ambiguous as well. If Abelard's writing produces an impression of his selfishness, can it be taken for granted that his writing portrays the "real" nature of Abelard? Besides, if in "Historia"

Abelard implies his selfish treatment toward Heloise, can he still be considered selfish?

It is not very fair, though, to exclude totally the modern critics' negative opinion of Abelard's self based on "Historia". Indeed, I have questioned the version of truth in "Historia". However, if nothing is wholly true, nothing is wholly wrong either. Abelard's "Historia" might not be considered true, but at the same time might not be completely wrong. Similarly, the critics' comments on Abelard's selfishness cannot be considered as merely "wrong". Abelard can be considered unselfish by admitting his thoughtless treatment toward Heloise. From another point of view, Abelard's description of his "selfish-ness" can be one of the strategies used by the autobiographer. The writer will confess his/her defect as part of making the autobiography seem "natural" and thus, "real". Katherine R. Goodman explains that an autobiographical subject is "a pose" or "a role" (cited in Brodzki, 1988; 308). Making "the role" imperfect will seem more natural than making it perfect. Thus, Abelard might want to give the impression that he is not selfish by admitting his fault, and thus he is actually selfish.

Furthermore, the critics' negative opinion of Abelard might also be right since Abelard might have wanted to confess his sin in the social and religious context of his time, which still considered women to be the "weaker sex", without feeling guilty for what he did to Heloise. His confession of his "pride and lechery" (65) might not be addressed to Heloise. Admitting that he "recalled how since the beginning of the human race women had brought the noblest men to ruin" (70) when asking forgiveness from Fulbert, Abelard could not have anticipated that this statement would be turned against him by modern critics. Thus, at the time of writing, Abelard might have not intended that statement as an admission of his selfishness to Heloise. Since describing his

treatment of Heloise would not be considered negative by the society of that time or himself, Abelard can be considered selfish: he is following his contemporary society's stereotype about women to protect his own reputation, and is not very thoughtful about women himself. So, what the critics state about Abelard's selfishness might not be true, but at the same time it is not totally wrong. Abelard's representation of himself can be seen from different angles. This shows that the interpretation of the self is never absolute.

The correspondence.

Compared with "Historia calamitatum", Heloise's and Abelard's correspondence has caused a lot of debate among the critics. Some critics believe that the letters between Heloise and Abelard, especially those of Heloise, are not "real" letters. This causes more argument about the interpretation of Heloise's and Abelard's selves. Some critics suggest that the letters might be written by friends of Heloise and Abelard. Some believe that the letters (including Heloise's) are written by Abelard only. Others believe that the letters are "real", which means that these critics think that Heloise and Abelard did write the letters, based on their "true" selves. Some proclaim that the letters were written by Heloise and Abelard but then added to and modified by forgers.

While not contesting the authenticity of "Historia calamitatum", Robertson maintains that the correspondence between Heloise and Abelard "obviously forms a 'collection' made for a special purpose. . . There is no reason whatsoever for thinking that the letters attributed to Heloise in this collection were actually composed as genuine letters by her" (Robertson, 1972; 120-1). He asserts that the letters of Heloise and Abelard create the characters of Heloise and Abelard who can give an

extreme example of those both "in degradation and in the final triumph of reasonableness" (Robertson, 1972; 124)[2].

Years after Heloise became a nun, she accepted the "Historia", which was not addressed to her but to Abelard's friend. Nonetheless, Heloise wrote her first "personal letter" to Abelard in response to Abelard's "Historia". Some of the translators of the text believe that Heloise's personal letters are not "authentic" because her letters oppose Abelard's "Historia", which "authenticity" is not doubted. In "Historia", Abelard states that as the founder of Heloise's Paraclete, he "invited her [Heloise], along with some other nuns from the same

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2. In addition to Robertson's argument, there are some more arguments which set forth the inauthenticity and ingenuity of the correspondence. John Benton, for instance, states that a man wrote Heloise's letters to "put women in their place" (Kauffman, 1986; 88). Enid McLeod notes that a Swiss, Orelli, "challenged the authenticity, not of the *Historia calamitatum,* but of the other four" and stated that the letters "had been written, not by Heloise and Abelard, but by one of their friends" (McLeod, 1971; 245). McLeod also writes that Mlle. C. Charrier argued that "Abailard [sic] fabricated at any rate the four so-called love-letters for purposes of publicity" (McLeod, 1971; 246). Furthermore, J.T. Muckle writes that "L. Lalanne, in an article written in 1856, states that the letters both of Abelard and her own were worked over and put in their shape by Heloise" (Muckle, 1953; 48). Doubt about the authenticity of the letters is also expressed by Etienne Gibson. He records that while "the authority of *Historia calamitatum* is unimpeachable", some critics like Lalanne, Schmeidler and Miss Charrier doubt the authenticity of the letters (Gibson, 1972; 147). E.P.M. Dronke states that "In Heloise's letters as in Marianne's . . . it is men who, since the late 17th century, have spent their time and ingenuity trying to show both these collections to be forgeries, written . . . by an Abelard, a Guilleragues, or some male unknown" (Dronke, 1960; 23).

convent" (97) and"visit[ed] them more often to see how I could help them" (98). This suggests that they kept up a correspondence before Heloise wrote her first personal letter. However, in some of the translations of Heloise's first personal letter, Heloise complains that Abelard has never seen her and written to her after their entry into religious institutions.

Arguing that the correspondence is not "authentic", Lalanne translates it as follows: "Only tell me, if you can, why, since our entrance into religion which you resolved upon without consulting me, you have so neglected me, so forgotten me, that it has not been given me to have either your presence to renew my courage or even a letter to enable me to endure your absence" (cited in Gilson, 1972; 148). M. Gréard offers a similar translation: "Dis-moi seulement, si tu le peux, pourquoi, depuis ma retraire que toi seul as décidée, tu en es venu à me négliger, à m'oublier si bien, qu'il ne m'a été donné ni de t'entendre pour retremper mon courage, ni de te lire pour me consoler de ton absence" (Gréard, n.d.; 59).

In addition, in Gréard's translation of Abelard's reply to Heloise, Abelard seems to agree with Heloise's statement that he has never written any letters to Heloise after their conversion to religion: "Si, depuis que nous avons quitté le monde pour Dieu, *je ne t'ai pas encore adressé un mot de consolation ou d'exhortation* [my italics], ce n'est point à ma négligence qu'il faut en attribuer la cause, mais à ta sagesse dans laquelle j'ai toujours eu une absolue confiance" (Gréard, n.d.; 63-4). This produces another contradiction with "Historia". For these reasons, it seems to be quite reasonable for some critics to suspect the authenticity of their correspondence.

However, this argument can be misleading, as the possibility above is based on the translations. Originally written in Latin, the

letters become the subject of change and different interpretations when translated into other languages. Enid McLeod, for instance, believes that the letters were written by Heloise. In McLeod's view, "Héloïse is complaining not that she had not seen Abailard [sic], but that, when she did, he had refrained from any personal talk" (McLeod, 1972; 251). Accordingly, she translates the phrase as follows: "Only tell me, if you canst, why since our conversion which thou alone decreedst, I am neither encouraged with a talk when thou art here, nor comforted with a letter in thine absence" (McLeod, 1971; 251).

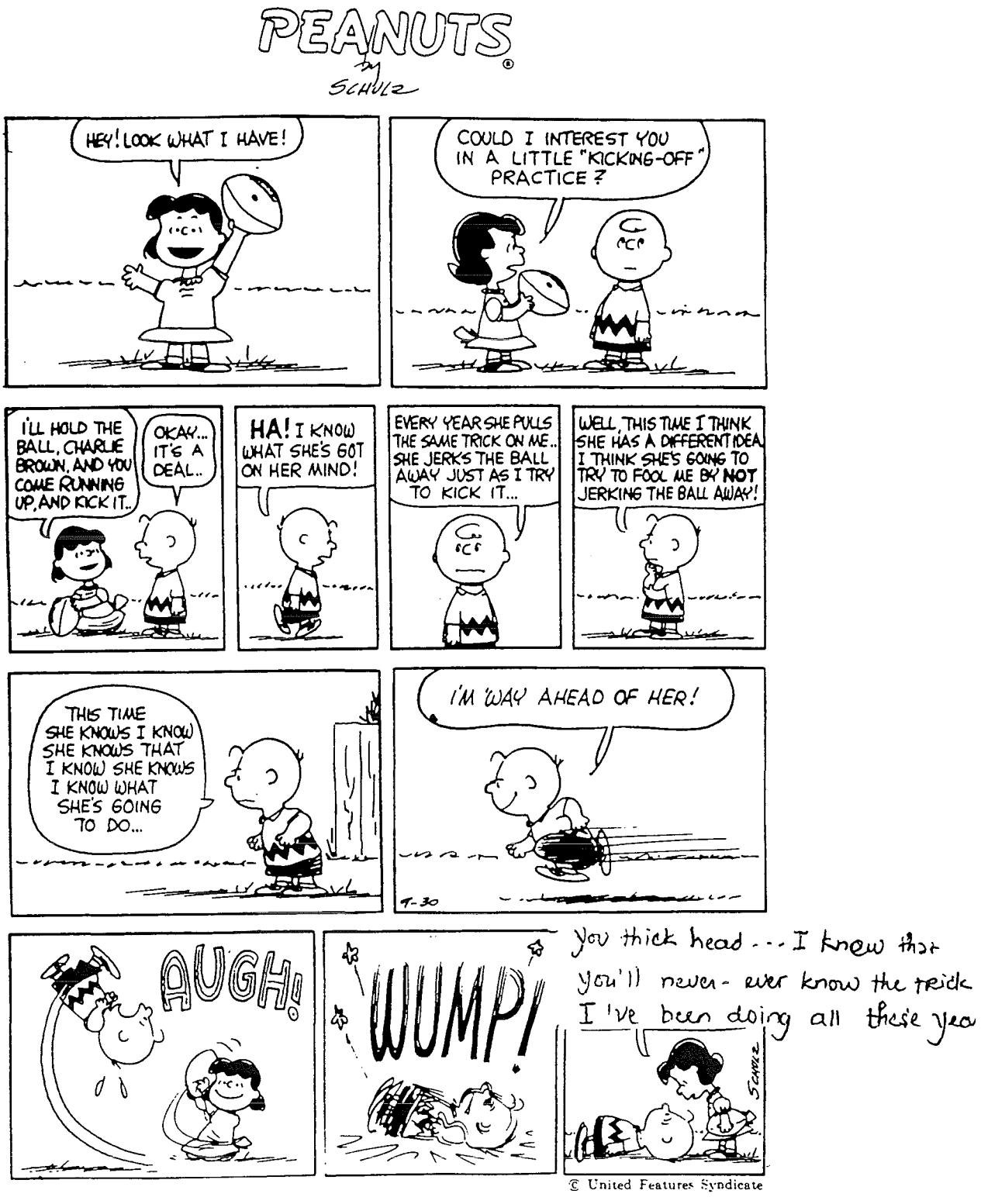
In addition, John Hughes translates Heloise's statement as: "But tell me whence proceeds your Neglect of me since my being profess'd? You know nothing mov'd me to it but your Disgrace, nor did I give any Consent but yours. Let me hear what is the Occasion of your Coldness" (cited in Wellington 1965; 77). Similar to McLeod's translation, Hughes's implies that Heloise complains not that Abelard does not have any correspondence with her but that he has not given her enough consolation. This shows how the interpreter decodes the text according to his/her point of view. Reading will produce a re-writing and rewriting becomes the means to re-right the text.

The question of authenticity is further set forth in Abelard's first personal letter to Heloise. In this letter, Abelard tells her that he hastens "to send the psalter you earnestly begged from me" (119). The critics who reject the authenticity of the letters argue that the letters must be made up, since in her letter, to which Abelard replies, Heloise does not mention the psalter (McLeod, 1971; 247). This argument can be misleading, for if someone arranges the correspondence, s/he will be likely to maintain the unity of the text and such a discrepancy will not occur.

However, the above argument concerning the authenticity of the letter can also fall apart if the forger of the letter knows that some people will expect a tidy unity from epistolary fiction, and vice versa. The best manipulation takes place when people do not realize that they are being deceived. If the manipulator is familiar with the theories most critics use, using such theories to prove the authenticity of the text will be useless. In Liaisons dangereuses, for instance, Laclos states that the text is a collection and that he is only the editor of the letters given to him; whereas the publisher states that it is only a fiction. In Liaisons dangereuses, there are a number of letters which do not seem to follow from the previous one. For example in Letter XVI, Cecile mentions to Sophie that she has told her about the beautiful evening she spent with Chevalier Danceny and Madame de Merteuil. However, her previous letter does not say anything about that evening. Laclos adds a note which says: "The letter which speaks of this evening cannot be found" (Laclos, 1927; 91). This apparent carelessness, though, might be intentional to authenticate the letters. The forger of Heloise's and Abelard's correspondence might have considered this possibility, and the discrepancy in the text may be another manipulation to assure the reader of the authenticity of the text.

Thus, if the letters of Heloise and Abelard seem "authentic" because they have some discrepancies, that may be because the forger has done a double manipulation: the forger writes the letters in Heloise's name and makes another manipulation by adding some incongruities. A double manipulation can therefore give the impression of non-manipulation.

This is similar to the boy in the cartoon "Peanuts" (see page 21). He is performing a double trick on the girl who he thinks will perform a double trick as well. Both, however, have the wrong expectation of



the other. The girl is not doing what the boy thinks. She is still doing the same trick she has done for years. On the other hand, the boy is not merely an idiot who never predicts the trick the girl has usually done. Instead of failing to anticipate her action, he is doubly anticipating her.

The girl is right in thinking that the boy will try to kick the ball as he has done every year. Nevertheless, she is wrong in stating that he is a complete idiot who never guesses what she has done every time. On the other hand, the boy is wrong in thinking that she will do a double trick. However, he is also right, since she is still tricking him. Each thinks according to his/her interpretation of the other. In parallel, the critics' interpretations of Heloise's and Abelard's selves become more or less their own modifications of Heloise and Abelard. This situation causes a good deal of ambivalence in deciding the authenticity of the self in the collection of letters.

While letters are used to judge the writer's self, the reader's presumption of the writer's self also influences the interpretation of letters. The belief that Heloise's self is religious influences the argument of the inauthenticity of her letters. As a respected abbess, Heloise still shows her desire for Abelard in her letters. Heloise's first personal letter implies how "Historia" revives her memory of the past, and causes her fresh wounds. In her second letter, she even shows how hypocritical she is for still wanting Abelard, while wearing a nun's clothes. Because J.T. Muckle presumes that Heloise's religious self is undoubtable, he argues that Heloise's letters are not authentic. He states:

> [Heloise's] letters picture Heloise as leading a double life: that of a religious superior bound by vows, and as a woman of sensual mind, serving Abelard and not God, or as she herself puts it, being such a hypocrite as to fool even Abelard himself.

> On the other hand, Heloise enjoyed a good reputation among the religious leaders of the time from the Pope down and among the people about the Paraclete which was that of a sincere, able and holy religious and a worthy abbess.
>
> In view of the evidence, I am inclined to think that the first two letters of Heloise, at any rate were worked over and perhaps expanded to some extent (Muckle, 1953; 67)

In addition, Robertson, who also insists on the inauthenticity of the letters, states that Heloise has been converted to the religious life, and that there is no reason to think that Heloise was still "much disturbed [by the erotic memory] by the time she became Abbess of the Paraclete" (Robertson, 1972; 124). Linda S. Kauffman, in contrast, believes that the letters were written by Heloise and that her duality or ambivalence is possible. She argues: "there is every reason to believe that it is Heloise herself who provides the evidence of her double life, that she is the one making a conscious effort to expose it" (Kauffman, 1986 ; 73).

Accordingly, like Abelard's self in "Historia calamitatum", Heloise's and Abelard's selves in the correspondence are not free from the transforming nature of interpretation. Peter Dronke notices how differently Heloise's self can be interpreted:

> To one considering the affair as simply human love, Heloise plays the nobler part; Abelard is ungrateful and cruel.
>
> But if we consider Heloise's side of the case from the standpoint of the principles of her faith and of the life to which she was pledged, it takes on a different character (Muckle, 1953; 60).

In the period when Catholicism was popular, Heloise's letters would sound coquettish, selfish and shameful for not supporting Abelard's reformed faith. Contemporary readers, though, find Heloise's letters much more interesting than Abelard's because of her passion. Robertson points out that readers are "disappointed because

the subsequent consolation offered by Abelard is not more sentimental" (Robertson, 1972; 123).

However, other critics such as Linda S. Kauffman, Peggy Kamuf and Betty Radice, justify Heloise's passion. Kauffman challenges the humiliation of Heloise's self by writing that Heloise's desire for Abelard "remains sacred" (Kauffman, 1986; 64). Kauffman also argues that the "harshness" of Abelard's reply demonstrates "how little Abelard understands passion, how little he feels 'sympathy and pain for the anxieties' of Heloise, and how little he cherishes her love" (Kauffman, 1986; 69).

Comparing Heloise's letters with Abelard's "Historia" becomes quite interesting as it shows how the past becomes the subject of edition, omission and re-presentation. Heloise's protest about Abelard's description of what has happened between them demonstrates that both are concerned with modifying their self-representations. Consequently, Heloise's and Abelard's writings about their own selves cannot be regarded as "the truth".

In her first letter, for instance, Heloise disagrees with Abelard's story of their marriage. Abelard writes in "Historia" that when he suggested that they get married, Heloise tried to refuse by arguing that "the name of mistress instead of wife would be dearer to her and more honourable for me [Abelard]" (74). Heloise, however, complains that Abelard has omitted an important part of her argument: "there you thought fit to set out some of the reasons I gave in trying to dissuade you from binding us together in an ill-starred marriage. But you kept silent about most of my arguments for preferring love to wedlock and freedom to chain "(114). Referring to Abelard's sentence about the "wife" and changing it into her own, Heloise's letter implies Abelard's inaccuracy of writing. She continues: "God is my witness that if

Augustus, Emperor of the whole world, thought fit to honour me with marriage and conferred all the earth on me to possess for ever, it would be dearer and more honourable to me to be called not his Empress but your whore" (114).

Writing this, Heloise might want to emphasize her sacrificial self by stressing: "I wanted simply you, nothing of yours. I looked for no marriage-bond, no marriage portion" (113). Declaring her desire for Abelard without any bond, which Abelard has omitted, Heloise implies that Abelard is enough for her and that she does not expect a big sacrifice from him (such as marriage) which can be a demanding commitment for a philosopher like him. Heloise makes a bigger contrast of the words "whore" and "wife" by writing that even if she became the wife of the "Emperor of the whole world" (not just any man), it would be more honourable for her to be Abelard's whore. This shows how much she desires Abelard, so that even becoming his whore is more honourable for her than anything else.

Another incongruity between Abelard's "Historia" and Heloise's letters concerns Heloise's vows. Heloise writes in her letter: "When you hurried towards God I followed you, indeed, I went first to take the veil - perhaps you were thinking how Lot's wife turned back when you made me put on the religious habit and take my vows before you gave yourself to God" (117). That Abelard's intention is like Lot's is not stated in "Historia", it is Heloise's perception of him. After stating this, she proclaims: "Remember, I implore you, what I have done" (117). Writing this, Heloise asks why, after all her sacrifice for Abelard, he still has no trust in her.

In the discrepancy between Heloise's and Abelard's representations of themselves, some contemporary critics take it for granted that Heloise's descriptions of her unlimited devotion to Abelard and of

Abelard's jealousy and selfishness are true. Kauffman notes Heloise's "selflessness in so many other ways" (69). Moreover, in her introduction to the text, Betty Radice records: "She may have guessed - and rightly - that jealous possessiveness prompted Abelard in this [asking Heloise to be a nun] as in the secret marriage" (23). From another point of view, though, Abelard's asking Heloise to be a nun can be seen as protecting Heloise. Having committed adultery and sacrilege, having had a son before marriage, and condemned by her uncle and society, Heloise might not be safe to stay alone. Being a nun may give her a "rehabilitated" identity and present a different impression of her, and in a way, protect her from society's condemnation. The "truth" of the interpretation of Heloise's and Abelard's selves, however, cannot be known.

While the critics' opinion may not be true, it may not be wrong either. Protection is always very close to jealousy, and the pitiable is close to the monstrous. Barthes comments:

> The subject suddenly realizes that he is imprisoning the loved object in a net of tyrannies: he has been pitiable, now he becomes monstrous. . . . he acts as a tyrannical detective and constantly subjects the beloved to malicious spying, while he himself subjects himself to no such prohibitions, later on, as to infidelity and ingratitude (Barthes, 1977; 165).

All of these different and opposing opinions show the problem of interpretation of the self in the epistolary tradition. Writing about it, the critics have to base their opinions on the text, but the text is subject to the critics' points of view as well. While the letters might be the subject of forgery by other writers, the translators and critics themselves forge their ideas on the text. Hence, if the text itself is ambiguous, the interpretation of Heloise's and Abelard's selves can be a problem: who is it that we are discussing? Heloise and Abelard or Heloise and Abelard as characters in an epistolary fiction? The truth of the text becomes

nothing other than the paper truth. The critics' arguments are based on the letters, but they can twist the contents of the letters in such a way that the letters suit their arguments.

The problems of the classification of Heloise's and Abelard's selves.

Although The Letters of Abelard and Heloise has undergone many manipulations, some critics still try to define Heloise's and Abelard's selves by classifying their models of the self. In Discourses of Desire, Linda S. Kauffman differentiates between two models of self: the Platonic and the Ovidian. The Platonic model, which, she argues, has become the premise of Western literature, sees the self as coherent and unified. Showing some examples of the female characters in The Art of Love, Ovid challenges the Platonic model of unity, consistency and clarity. Instead of seeing illusion as the closure of the real, Ovid "celebrates illusion for its own sake" (Kauffman, 1986; 52). He even emphasizes the cultivation of appearance by a mask or make-up. However, the process of manipulation in letter writing makes the interpretation of the self quite tricky: while letters enable the writer to express his/her intention, they also dissimulate it. This makes any classification of the writer's self ambiguous.

In The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, Heloise shows how she uses "make-up" by covering her desire for Abelard while at the same time revealing it. Her letters, therefore, are full of ambiguities and paradoxes which make it clear that she is acting a part. Heloise, in this case, can be seen as a suitable example of the Ovidian model of self. From another point of view, however, Heloise still follows the Platonic model of unity, consistency and clarity by continuously reversing the

opposite terms (for example, monastic - secular) in her letters to gain attention from Abelard.

On the other hand, Abelard gives the impression of being the model of the Platonic. Some critics, such as Kauffman, Kamuf and J.T. Muckle, who discuss the dissimulation and inconsistency of Heloise, do not mention that of Abelard. Kamuf argues that Abelard's letters are marked by "univocal authority" and his identity is guaranteed by "stability" which "has its origin and its expression in the very act that dissociates Abelard from the incorporated evidence of contradictory desire: his castration" (Kamuf, 1982; 35).

Indeed, Abelard's letters seem to be clear and consistent. However, what is actually behind this consistency and unity? Like the best manipulator and forger of the letters, a masquerade is most effective when the people being deceived do not notice that a mask is being worn. This causes an unending paradox: the more genuine it seems, the more manipulative it is. Consequently, there are some overlaps between the classifications of the self: Heloise's and Abelard's selves can be said to be following both models, the Platonic as well as the Ovidian. This undermines Kauffman's statement that the Ovidian and Platonic models are separate from one another.

Writing to her ex-lover as a nun creates ambiguity in Heloise's letters. She appears to submit to Abelard's authority, but at the same time rebels against it. Her multiple forms of address to Abelard in her first personal letter show her ambiguity: "To her master, or rather her father, husband, or rather brother; his handmaid, or rather his daughter, wife, or rather sister; to Abelard, Heloise" (109). Her address contains hierarchical, monastic as well as intimate and personal terms. The hierarchical addresses (master - handmaid, father-daughter) show her submission to Abelard. The monastic terms (master-handmaid,

brother-sister) mark her submission to the religious life which is induced by Abelard's authority. However, she inserts more intimate terms "husband-wife" and ends with a personal address: "to Abelard, Heloise". This is an example that indicates Heloise's method of insinuating rebellion against despotism.

At the beginning of her first letter, she talks more like a prioress representing her religious daughters to a monk. She uses the plural "we" to indicate her representation of a body of nuns. Since Abelard is the founder of their oratory, Heloise requests Abelard to share his sorrow or joy with them and to care more for them: "Your superior wisdom knows better than our humble learning of the many serious treatises which the holy Fathers compiled for the instruction or exhortation or even the consolation of holy women, and of the care with which these were composed" (112).

Her representation of the nuns, nevertheless, seems to be intended to conceal her personal desire for Abelard. Her requests for the nunnery's community imply some seductive intentions which refer to Abelard and Heloise's previous relationship. She writes: "This was a wilderness open to wild beasts and brigands, a place which had known no home nor habitation of men." The "wilderness" seems to suggest Heloise's virginity and vulnerability. She calls Abelard "the sole founder of this place, the sole builder of this oratory, the sole creator of his community" (111). Heloise stresses the word "the sole" which may hint that Abelard is the only man in her life and her only protector. She continues: "You have built nothing here upon another man's foundation. Everything here is your own creation". This insinuates that Abelard is the cause of everything that happens in her life. Heloise's erotic intentions are further indicated by the image of Abelard as the first planter of the seed and the Paraclete as the

"feminine" plantation. The picture can be a parallel to her pregnancy: Abelard puts the seed in her "plantation".

However, finally Heloise breaks the pretence. Changing the plural form "we" into the singular "I", she makes it clearer that her representation of the nuns is part of the strategy of rhetoric designed to mask her personal desire. By doing this, she rebels against the formal form of a monastic letter:

> And so in the precarious early days of our conversion long ago *I* [my italics] was not a little surprised and troubled by your forgetfulness, when neither reverence for God nor our mutual love nor the example of the holy Fathers made you think of trying to comfort me (112).

After breaking this despotic form of letter writing which Heloise is supposed to adopt as a "good" nun, Heloise narrates her endurance of Abelard's despotism: "You are the sole cause of my sorrow, and you alone can grant me the grace of consolation. You alone have the power to make me sad, to bring me happiness or comfort" (113).

In her letters, Heloise deviates from the pattern of rebellion by putting on the mask of submission. This dissimulation is indicated as she writes: "I believe that the more I humbled myself on your account, the more gratitude I should win from you, and also the less damage I should do to the brightness of your reputation" (113). Subduing her rebellious self to Abelard's mastery also keeps alive erotic possibilities.

Heloise again suggests her rebellion beneath the mask of obedience as she talks about her desire for Abelard: "While I enjoyed with you the pleasures of the flesh, many were uncertain whether I was prompted by love or lust; but now the end is proof of the beginning. I have finally denied myself every pleasure in obedience of your will, kept nothing for myself except to prove that now. . . I am yours" (117). The masquerade is

that even while denying her pleasures, Heloise proves that she is Abelard's. In Being and Nothingness, Jean-Paul Sartre argues: "pleasure is the death and the failure of desire. It is the death of desire because it is not only its fulfilment but its limit and its end" (Sartre, 1984; 397). Desire exists for what is lacking. Thus, by renouncing her wish to fulfil her desire, Heloise keeps it alive. This becomes her way of showing her rebellion against Abelard. In addition, using elimination of pleasure to rebel against Abelard gives her, in a way, another sort of pleasure.

Heloise's duality in her letters is often interpreted as a sign of her powerful memory of her past with Abelard. Betty Radice states: "Abelard was a changed man, physically and spiritually; she was not changed, she . . . was tormented by frustrated sexual love" (23). In this case, J.G. Altman argues in Epistolarity:

> The time gap between writer and addressee makes of any epistolary verb a potentially polyvalent one. In his statement the *I* can address only a *you* who is an image persisting from the past; likewise, the *you* who receives the message exists in yet another time, which was the future to the *I* sending the message (132).

That Abelard is a different man from the past, though, might have been realized by Heloise. Known as an intelligent scholar in letters, Heloise could even have intended this discrepancy as a way of taking revenge for Abelard's coldness after she obeys his commands.

Heloise states her obedience to Abelard: "When you hurried towards God I followed you" (116). Yet after such sacrifice, Heloise shows that Abelard gives her no reward: "I am denied your presence" (116). While throughout her letters, she implies her unlimited love and sacrifice for Abelard, Heloise shows another contradiction of herself by asking for Abelard's reward: "I deserve much of you, seeing that I carried out everything for your sake and continue up to the present moment in

complete obedience to you" (116). She demands: "give me at least through your words - of which you have enough and to spare - some sweet semblance of yourself" (116). This shows how love is a kind of trade: I have given you something, now I want you to repay me for that.

In Lover's Discourse, Barthes writes about this exchange:

> A typical argument of a 'scene' is to represent to the other what you are giving him or her (time, energy, money, ingenuity, other relations, etc.); for it is invoking the reply which makes any scene 'move': And what about me! Haven't I given you everything? . . . To declare what I am giving is to follow the family model: *Look at the sacrifices we're making for you* . . . . To speak of the gift is to place it in an exchange economy (77).

Heloise's letters can be the means of showing her desire to Abelard and at the same time the means of revenging his "debt" to her.

Abelard's letters, on the other hand, sound more definite. He does not seem to be ambiguous about his converted self. Since his first letter "Historia calamitatum", Abelard's letters show a more unified and consistent self: devotion to religious life. His personal letters even address Heloise as a nun, which demonstrates his resolution in separating the opposite of secular - monastic and lust - chastity. However, the consistency of his address does not mean that Abelard does not wear any mask.

His modification of himself in "Historia" which has been discussed previously, shows that his unified and consistent self as revealed in his letters is not "real", but constructed. Consequently, Abelard's unified self is more or less a manipulation. Furthermore, the spreading of the "Historia calamitatum" by Abelard raises a question: whether during his correspondence to Heloise, Abelard is aware of the possibility of public opinion. If his awareness does exist when writing letters, the self in his

letters is probably only the continuance of the self in the "Historia calamitatum", the coherent and united self of a monk. As a consequence, since the writer is aware of the public eye, the letters will be designed to shield him from possible public criticism. His textual unified religious self, then, can serve as the veil to protect himself from this kind of criticism.

Abelard's replies to Heloise show his effort to reflect a religious self. His first reply ignores Heloise's intimate references completely. It seems impossible, however, that Abelard does not acknowledge Heloise's intimate frame of reference. In the "Historia calamitatum", Abelard acknowledges using earlier letters as a mask for erotic desires: "When separated we could enjoy each other's presence by exchange of written messages in which we could speak more openly than in person and so need never lack the pleasures of conversation" (66). Presumably, this indicates that Abelard recognizes Heloise's pretence by placing a mask of respectability over her erotic desire.

Abelard, however, disguises his awareness of Heloise's pretence in his first personal letter to Heloise. Instead, he seems to manipulate their exchange by referring only to God and religious life. He uses this ploy possibly to escape being dragged down by Heloise's manipulations. He addresses Heloise just as one of the nuns in the community. Evading the erotic implications, Abelard ends the letter by referring Heloise to her sisters in Christ: "Live, fare you well, yourself and your sisters with you, Live, but I pray, in Christ be mindful of me" (126).

He makes the excuse that he has not written to Heloise for a long time because he is confident that she is quite strong: "If since our conversion from the world to God I have not yet written you any word of comfort or advice, it must not be attributed to indifference on my part but to your own good sense, in which I have always such a confidence

that I did not think anything was needed" (119). In contrast, Abelard refers to women as "the weaker sex". Despite his professed opinion of women, nevertheless, he takes it for granted that Heloise is strong. Even more, he asks for Heloise's and her sisters' support for his religious life saying that he needs far more prayers than Heloise needs. In other words, Abelard's letter implies that he is weaker than these women. This shows that Abelard's self as portrayed in his letters also contains the possibility of inconsistency.

The use of masquerade in their relationship even seems to be initiated by Abelard. Initially, Abelard uses the pretext that his household cares are hindering his studies so that Heloise's uncle will let Abelard stay with him. Attracted to Heloise, Abelard uses this pretext to unite "under one roof" (67) with Heloise. Abelard has also used the pretext of mastery to arouse eroticism when he is teaching Heloise at Fulbert's: "To avert suspicion I sometimes struck her, but these blows were prompted by love and tender feeling rather than anger and irritation, and were sweeter than any balm could be" (67).

The use of a pretext to conceal the opposite intention also seems to be a habit established in their pedagogic activity: "and so with our lessons as a pretext we abandoned ourselves entirely to love. Her studies allowed us to withdraw in private, as love desired, and then with our books open before us, more words of love than of our reading passed between us, and more kissing than teaching" (67). Hence, the revival of Abelard's mastery can be the revival of the "love and tender feeling" which "was sweeter than any balm could be". For Heloise, submitting to Abelard's despotism accompanies winning his erotic attention.

This duality is used continually in Heloise's second personal letter. In this letter, Heloise reproves Abelard for breaking the form of address in letter writing because Abelard puts Heloise's name before his name:

"Surely the right and proper order is for those who write to their superiors or equals to put their names before their own, but in letters to inferiors, precedence in order of address follows precedence in rank" (127). Heloise's reproval shows her assurance of Abelard's authority, which is used to invite eroticism. Heloise's use of mastery as a pretext to revive eroticism is similarly manifested as she rejects Abelard's praise. She tries to get Abelard's attention by showing her laxity to arouse her teacher's anger: "Do not suppose me healthy and so withdraw the grace of your healing. . . . Do not think me strong, lest I fall before you can sustain me" (134).

Her second letter, again, begins with her representing all the nuns but indicating herself. She writes: "we shall not be able to go on living when you leave us". However, later she indicates that she is actually the main source of such loyalty: "I would not even have us live to see that day" (128). That the plural "we" indicates the personal "I" is clearer as she pleads: "spare us - spare her at least, who is yours alone" (128).

Heloise's second personal letter sounds more submissive than her first one. She blames herself more than she does in the first letter. She even curses herself for Abelard's misery, calling herself "the cause of such a crime" (130). She condemns women for tempting men to commit sins: "It was the first woman in the beginning who lured man from Paradise, and she who had been created by the Lord as his helpmate became the instrument of his total downfall" (131). She degrades herself by comparing herself to Eve, Delilah and Job's wife who ruin their husbands. However, the more submissive her letter, the more it conveys her erotic desire for Abelard, as she writes:

> In my case, the pleasures of lovers which we shared have been too sweet - they can never displease me, and can scarcely be banished from my thoughts. Wherever I turn

> they are always there before my eyes, bringing with them awakened longings and fantasies which will not even let me sleep (133).

This letter, again, shows Heloise's duplicity. Her letter is full of the discourse of pathos. She humbles herself to get Abelard's sympathy. The more she renounces, the more she tries to win Abelard's attention.

Therefore, in his reply to Heloise's second letter, Abelard rejects Heloise's humility since rejecting Heloise's submission to his superiority means avoiding the erotic implications. He insists on putting Heloise's name before his own because: "you [Heloise] became my superior from the day when you began to be my lady on becoming the bride of my Lord" (137). In establishing Heloise's superiority, he separates the secular and monastic and makes the monastic the higher place: "It was a happy transfer of your married state, for you were previously the wife of a poor mortal and now are raised to the bed of the King of kings" (138).

Because Abelard's previous ploy of pretending not to see Heloise's manipulations does not stop Heloise, Abelard changes his approach. In this second letter, Abelard does not pretend any longer that he does not recognize Heloise's duplicity. Abelard accuses Heloise of hypocrisy. He writes that Heloise's rejection of his praise might not be sincere, and that she rejects the praise only to seem humble, so that she will receive more praise: "be careful . . . not to seek praise when you appear to shun it, and not to reject with your lips what you desire in your heart" (144). He hints at his recognition of Heloise's intimate references by the example of the "wanton Galatea" (144), which implies Heloise's eroticism: "She flees to the willows and wishes first to be seen" (144). He then, makes a gentler statement to neutralize this cynical example:

"I mention this because it is a common occurrence, not because I suspect such things of you, I have no doubts of your humility" (144).

Abelard's changing ploys in his letters show another form of his dissimulation. While projecting a Platonic self by being religious, Abelard's manipulations show that he also has Ovidian elements of self. His statement of Heloise's humility contains another duality as well. While saying that he does not suspect Heloise of hypocrisy, Abelard infers the opposite. He later demands: "I want you to refrain from speaking like this, so that you do not appear to those who do not know you so well to be seeking fame by shunning it" (144). Creating the impression that it is a request for Heloise's own benefit, Abelard conceals a demand for his own benefit: he wants to stop Heloise from using this kind of rhetoric.

Another form of Abelard's masquerade is manifested as they talk about happiness. Abelard's argument tries to turn Heloise's submission away from her erotic intentions. In her first letter, Heloise cares for Abelard's sorrow but also demands that Abelard console her for her sorrow which is caused by him. She writes: "It [Abelard's letter] told the pitiful story of our entry into religion and the cross of unending suffering which you, my only love, continue to bear. . . . No one, I think, could read or hear it dry-eyed" (109-10). First, Heloise talks only about Abelard's suffering without mentioning her own suffering. When later she talks about her suffering, she states that it is caused by Abelard's suffering: "my own sorrows are renewed by the detail in which you have told it, and redoubled because you say your perils are still increasing" (110).

Heloise's rhetoric, in this case, seems to create the effect that her demands for Abelard's consolation are induced by Abelard's letter, instead of arising from herself. It is a kind of blackmail, as Barthes

explains: "Askesis (the impulse toward askesis) is addressed to the other: turn back, look at me, see what you have made of me. It is a blackmail: I raise before the other the figure of my own disappearance, as it will surely occur, if the other does not yield" (Barthes, 1978; 33). The blackmailing of the lover, though, is what Sartre calls "a special type of appropriation", for the lover "wants to possess a freedom as freedom" (Sartre, 1984; 367). While Heloise wants to be consoled by Abelard because of her sexual and romantic frustration, she does not want Abelard to do this under too much pressure. Her desire to make Abelard do what she wants should be done voluntarily and happily by him. Her "blackmail" should be hidden so that it looks like Abelard's own will. For this reason, she has to find a way to make Abelard do what she wants, but at the same time, what she wants should be similar to what he wants. Thus, instead of blaming Abelard by stating: "I am unhappy because of you", Heloise makes a more unselfish statement: "I am unhappy because you are unhappy".

However, as Sartre states, the lover also "demands that this freedom as freedom should no longer be free" (Sartre, 1984; 367). Abelard's "happiness", of course, is not free from Heloise's intimate intentions. Surely, Heloise cannot be happy if Abelard is happy with his monastic life and forgets her. She actually does not want Abelard to be happy apart from her. So, while she wants Abelard to be free from his unhappiness, she wants to feel his happiness in herself. Abelard's happiness should be chained and glued to hers. In this case, Heloise is also unhappy if Abelard is happy (with his monastic life).

Like Heloise, Abelard often wears a mask in a monastic form while actually indicating himself. Abelard uses the metaphor of prayers to God to describe Heloise's pleadings to him:

> Consider then the great power of prayer, if we pray as we are bidden, seeing that the prophet won by prayer what he was forbidden to pray for, and turned God aside from his declared intention. And another prophet says to God: 'In thy wrath remember mercy'. The lords of the earth should listen and take note, for they are found obstinate rather than just in the execution of the justice they have decreed and pronounced; they blush to appear lax if they are merciful, and untruthful if they change a pronouncement or do not carry out a decision which lacked foresight, even if they can emend their words by their actions (120-21).

Heloise's plea is politely compared to the prayer of a prophet, while Abelard is compared to God. Abelard implies that he will seem cruel if he does not listen to Heloise, but he will seem lax and irresolute if he fulfils her wishes. Abelard tries to defy Heloise's accusation by indicating his awareness of her blackmailing: her pleading subjects him to moral pressure. Thus, Heloise's statement "I am unhappy because you are unhappy" is attacked by Abelard: "You are blackmailing me by making me feel guilty because you are unhappy that I am unhappy".

Abelard hints that he can never feel happy in life and it is selfish of Heloise to force him to be happy so that she can be happy. This is manifested in his second personal letter to Heloise:

> At least you must know that whoever frees me from life will deliver me from the greatest suffering. What I may afterwards incur is uncertain, but from what I shall be set free is not in question. Every unhappy life is happy in its ending, and those who feel true sympathy and pain for the anxieties of others want to see these ended, even to their own loss, if they really love those they see suffer and think more of their friends' advantage than of their own. . . . I cannot see why you should prefer me to live in great misery rather than be happier in death. If you see your

> advantage in prolonging my miseries, you are proved an enemy, not a friend (143).

For these reasons, Abelard requests Heloise to stop her pleading: "I beg you, as I said before, to cease your complaint" (143). All of his statements about his suffering in the world and his hope of after-life-happiness might also be another way of showing his repentance to society. Abelard might want to counter the impression of his previous selfishness to the monastery by his forgetting worldly pleasures and by talking about God. However, in this way, Abelard is also selfish as he ignores Heloise's happiness. By stopping Heloise from trying to make him happy, Abelard forces Heloise to remain unhappy.

The form of this counterpoint can be described in the following way:

> Heloise is unhappy if Abelard is unhappy.
> Heloise is unselfish.
>
> If Heloise wants to be happy, she has to make Abelard happy.
>
> Heloise is blackmailing Abelard
> by forcing him to be happy
> so that she can be happy.
> Heloise is selfish.
>
> Abelard asks Heloise to stop putting a lot of effort into making him happy in his worldly life.
> (from his religious view) Abelard is unselfish.
>
> Abelard makes Heloise remain unhappy
> by forcing her to stop making him happy
> so that she can be happy.
> Abelard is selfish.
>
> If Abelard is happy with his monastic life, Heloise will be unhappy.
> So, Heloise is unhappy if Abelard is happy.
> But . . . .
>
> *da capo sine fine*

This form contains an unending paradox where one thing always insinuates the opposite. Heloise and Abelard can be selfish as well as

unselfish. Heloise is unhappy if Abelard is unhappy, but she is also unhappy if Abelard is happy.

While Abelard makes every attempt to stop the erotic connotations of Heloise's language, she continually tries to drag down Abelard in to the whirl pool form of contradiction to attract his attention. In her second personal letter to Abelard, Heloise implies that Abelard is selfish for making her remain unhappy:

> We were also greatly surprised when instead of bringing us the healing balm of comfort you increased our desolation and made the tears to flow which you should have dried. . . . The proper course would be for you to perform our funeral rites, for you to commend our souls to God, and to send ahead of you those whom you assembled for God's service (127-28).

Saying previously that he cannot be happy in life, Abelard expects Heloise to stop putting pressure on him and to wish for his death. Heloise highlights Abelard's selfishness by writing: "But if I lose you, what is left for me to hope for?" (129). Heloise tries to make Abelard realize that he is selfish in forcing her to stop making him happy so that she can be happy.

Abelard tries to deflect Heloise's insidious logic by drawing Heloise's attention to self-sacrifice. In his second personal letter, he uses a metaphor which contains eroticism and acknowledges their history of sexuality. Again, this is in contrast to his first letter in which he pretends not to acknowledge Heloise's erotic references. He gives an example of a black bride, which refers to Heloise's black monastic clothes. Abelard's letter sets forth what Abelard sees as the opposition contained in the metaphor of the black bride by arguing that a black bride is "black but lovely" (140). A black bride looks "less lovely than other women; . . . but in several respects she is whiter and lovelier, in her

bones, . . . or her teeth" (138). Stating this, Abelard is sailing close to the wind of Heloise's eroticism.

He ascribes Heloise's double nature to the fixed duality of Christian order. Heloise's duality of hidden/revealed eroticism is "rehabilitated" to self-sacrifice as Abelard relates this to the husband's desire:

> Moreover it often happens that the flesh of black women is all the softer to touch though it is less attractive to look at, and for this reason the pleasure they give is greater and more suitable for private than for public enjoyment, and their husbands take them into the bedroom to enjoy them rather than parade them before the world (140).

Abelard stresses that it is the husband's desire not the wife's desire which is important. By making this argument, Abelard requests Heloise to ignore her desire and sacrifice it to his own wishes. The appearance of the erotic through his monastic projection of self, though, shows it to be another form of Abelard's masquerade.

Trying to prevent Heloise from talking about eroticism, Abelard states the impossibility of Heloise's discourse of desire:

> If you are anxious to please me in everything, as you claim, and in this at least would end my torment, or even give me the greatest pleasure, you must rid yourself of it. If it persists you can neither please me or attain bliss with me. Can you bear me to come to this without you - I whom you declare yourself ready to follow to the very fires of hell? Seek piety in this at least, lest you cut yourself off from me who am hastening, you believe towards God (145).

Abelard's statement points out Heloise's manipulations without acknowledging his own. By this statement, Abelard possibly attempts to prevent Heloise from disturbing him and from putting her desires first.

Abelard's order seems to be obeyed by Heloise in her next letter in which she seeks Abelard's advice. Heloise's acceptance of Abelard's demands in the correspondence makes this letter one that is not classified as a personal letter, but a letter of direction. However, within the non-personal form of the letter, Heloise continues to subvert her agreement into a protest:

> I would not want to give you cause for finding me disobedient in anything, so I have set the bridle of your injunction on the words which issue from my unbounded grief; thus in writing at least I may moderate what it is difficult or rather impossible to forestall in speech (159).

This, again, contains duality. She states that only in the letter is she able to refrain from uttering all she feels; but actually only through her letters is she able to reveal her feelings, including her sexual desire for Abelard. Although classified as a letter of direction, this letter still alludes to Heloise's desire as she talks about Ovid's The Art of Love. However, Heloise covers this by calling Ovid the "master of sensuality and shame" (160). Heloise makes another allusion to her sexual desire in her quotation from the seventh book of Theodosius's Saturnalia:

> A woman's body which is destined for frequent purgations is pierced with several holes, so that it opens into channels and provides outlets for the moisture draining away to be dispersed. Through these holes the fumes of wine are quickly released. By contrast, in old men the body is dry, as is shown by their rough and wrinkled skin (166).

This quotation implies the difference between Heloise's and Abelard's bodies. Heloise's body is vibrant with sexual passion, whereas Abelard's is no longer sexual. Just as she has done since the first letter

to Abelard, Heloise uses a mask to reveal her feelings. This letter apparently seeks religious advice, but it contains erotic references.

To accuse Heloise of hypocrisy ignores the complexity of her letters. In her monastic life, Heloise can be called a "hypocrite" since she pretends to practice a belief that she does not really possess. She admits that she is pretending to be devoted to God while actually she is devoted to Abelard, as she says: "For if I truthfully admit to the weakness of my unhappy soul, I can find no penitence whereby to appease God. . . . By rebelling against his ordinance, I offend him more by my indignation than I placate him by making amends through penitence" (132). Admitting her hypocrisy means that Heloise does not pretend to be devoted to God while she is devoted to Abelard. In this case, her hypocrisy can be reinterpreted as a kind of honesty. Therefore, by declaring herself a hypocrite, Heloise actually implies the opposite.

Heloise seems to be the latent example of the Ovidian self, a self which is changeable and fluid. This does not mean that in her letters Heloise cannot project elements of the Platonic self, which are united and consistent. Heloise's writing actually has another consistency, too. Heloise blurs the fixed boundaries between opposites; between general and personal, monastic and secular, obedience and rebellion, silence and protest. This becomes the pattern of her letters. In talking about one term, she continuously insinuates the opposite. Subverting opposites, Heloise tries to set up a circle of logic from which Abelard cannot escape. In addition, this pattern is used to sustain another consistency: the expression of her undying passion for Abelard.

Conclusion.

There is always a problem in defining the self in a collection of letters because of the process of manipulation in the text. The

manipulation can come from the secretary, forgers, critics, interpreter and the letter writers themselves. Consequently, a collection of letters, which is considered to portray the truth, can be quite deceptive. The text has to undergo a long process before it is read by the public reader. As a result, it becomes full of distortions. Since in medieval times the letters were often dictated, the distortion could come from the secretary or scribe, who often acted as the designer of the wording of the letter. Another distortion could come from thieves or forgers who wanted their letters to be published.

Accordingly, Heloise's and Abelard's selves in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise are not free from the plasticity of opinions and interpretations. Some critics are convinced of the authenticity of Abelard's "Historia", saying that the letter has "a basis in fact" (Robertson, 1982; 100). Nevertheless, this "fact" is a distorted fact since the story in "Historia" is full of literary devices and guided by the public's reflection. Abelard's "Historia" is influenced by the Bible, Ovid's Metamorphoses and St. Augustine's Confessions, which modify Abelard's writing of his own self. His description of his own self, consequently, cannot portray the "true" self.

The "truth" of the correspondence itself causes more debate among the critics. Some critics state that forgeries occur in the text. However, the perception of whether the text is original or not depends on the translations and the critics' interpretations of the text. This shows that while they are talking about the forgers of the text, the critics can be the forgers themselves as they insert their points of view in the text. Since the authenticity of the text is in doubt, the interpretation of the self is even more problematical. The interpretation of the writer's self becomes a paper decision: the argument is based on the text alone.

The manipulative nature of an epistolary tradition makes the effort of defining the writer's self problematical. Linda S. Kauffman's attempt to categorize the self into the Ovidian and the Platonic selves becomes too extreme. Instead of being separate, these two kinds of self can complement one another. In his letters, Abelard seems to be Platonic. He is consistent with his monastic ideals. However, this consistency can be considered only a textual consistency. The textual self is highly influenced by the writer's ideological position. Abelard's intention of presenting himself as a religious man can be understood as his effort to revive his position in life.

Since Abelard makes copies of "Historia", there is a possibility that he is aware of the public eye while he is writing his letters to Heloise. Consequently, the consistent religious self in his letters may be only the continuance of his self from "Historia". This consistency allows him to veil himself from public criticism. Thus, Abelard does use a mask. Like Heloise, Abelard constantly talks about one thing and refers to another; for example, he talks about God and prayers but actually refers to himself and Heloise. In his effort to deflect Heloise's eroticism, he also uses various ploys. In his first letter to Heloise, he pretends not to realize Heloise's erotic intentions. Since this pretence does not work, he changes the ploy in his second letter: he hints at his realization of Heloise's eroticism by the example of "wanton Galatea" (144) and the "black bride" (140). The variation of his ploys and his use of masquerade show that Abelard actually has Ovidian elements of self.

On the other hand, Heloise seems to be a clear example of the Ovidian self. Her letters are full of paradoxes which show her masquerade and capriciousness. While apparently talking about the relationship between the whole community of the nunnery and

Abelard, she actually refers to herself. While submitting to Abelard's authority, she rebels against it. While living as a nun, she devotes herself to Abelard, not God. Her eroticism is veiled everywhere by her mask. However, her masquerade and capriciousness have an element of logic and consistency. She remains in the pattern of subverting opposites by blurring the fixed boundaries between them. For her, the general implies the personal, submission implies rebellion, and the end implies the beginning.

Thus, the problem of the interpretation of the self in epistolarity is hardly resolvable. The process of manipulation in the epistolary tradition makes the self open to many interpretations. To define a self according to a certain classification will be quite limited. The self in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise becomes a dialogue between the author and language, the text and the reader, and can therefore never be definite.

Chapter II. Intertextuality in Shklovsky's Zoo, or Letters Not about Love.

In this chapter, I will discuss how the intertextual nature of the text and the self creates some problems of interpreting the self in the epistolary text, Shklovsky's Zoo, or Letters Not About Love. Shklovsky is well known for his theory of defamiliarization. According to Shklovsky's theory, since our perception becomes automatic, art exists that "one may recover the sensation of life" (cited in Lemon, 1965; 12). Shklovsky argues that the daily things we see are so familiar that we do not notice them any more. An artist becomes like a craftman who shapes an object in such a way that it becomes noticeable. Since according to Shklovsky the sensation of perceiving the object is more important than the object itself, art is not the means of creating new things but the means of creating a fresh impression of already - existing - things: art*"creates a 'vision' of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it"* (cited in Lemon, 1965; 18). Because art derives from other sources, intertextuality in a text becomes unavoidable. That is to say, a text moves between itself and its sources: other texts.

That Zoo is a product of intertextuality is emphasized by naming it "The Third Heloise"[1] and by citing other texts such as those of Cervantes, Jonathan Swift, and H.C. Andersen. As a result of intertextuality, the authenticity of the text is in question. If the

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[1] After the medieval Heloise, J.J. Rousseau wrote Julie, or the New Heloise, which can be considered the second Heloise. This explains why Shklovsky calls his text "The Third Heloise".

authenticity of the text is in doubt, the identity of the self represented in the text will not be authentic either. Therefore, the issue of intertextuality also applies to the selves in the text. This intertextuality of the self means that Shklovsky's self is influenced by his addressee(s). Because in writing a letter, one always places one's self "vis-a-vis" the addressee(s); the role of the writer is always in relation to the other(s). This shows that like a text, one's self is never absolutely authentic, it is always in the process of intertextuality with the other's self.

Since in the theory of defamiliarization, the purpose of art is to create a special perception of the object, the selves and events described in the text are not real but only representations. One's self becomes subject to literary production. As a result, one's "fundamental" and "true" self becomes biased. The gap between imagination and the "truth" is obscure, as Patricia Meyer Spack argues:

> It can be argued that all fiction (and poetry and philosophy and painting) ultimately constitutes autobiography, the artist inventing whatever the purported aim of his creation, only a series of metaphors for the self. Conversely, one can maintain that all autobiography is fiction, the imposition of form and the discovery of meaning automatically converting life into its imitation" (cited in Elliott, 1982; 33).

So, the difference between fiction and "reality" is not absolute. Instead of being separate, fiction and "reality" are in intertextuality with each other. However, the debate about whether Heloise's and Abelard's letters in The Letters of Abelard and Heloise and Mariana's letters in The Portuguese Letters are fictive or not shows that there is nevertheless an effort to search for truth and authenticity in the epistolary tradition.

In Zoo, Shklovsky mixes "real" and fictive letters in the novel to defamiliarize the reader's predilection for separating "fact" from fiction. Seven of Alya's letters are generally considered to be "real" letters written by Elsa Triolet who later became quite well-known as a novelist. Shklovsky makes himself one of the characters in the books but informs the reader that his novel is fiction. In doing so, he blurs the gap between "fact" and fiction. Instead of being separated, "fact" and fiction are in intertextuality with each other. Thus, intertextuality becomes one of the aspects which make it difficult to interpret the self in the epistolary text.

Defamiliarization and intertextuality in and of the text(s).

Intertextuality, according to M.H.Abrams, is "the multiple ways in which any one literary text is inseparably inter-involved with other texts" (Abrams, 1993; 285). In addition, Kristeva argues that any text is "an 'intertext'- the site of an intersection of numberless other texts, including those which will be written in the future" (Abrams, 1993; 285). Art then is not a product of authenticity, but a matter of taking bits and pieces from other sources and making them the artist's own.

For this reason, Shklovsky chooses an old genre for his novel, epistolarity. However, since the form is quite popular, it has become more familiar. So, Shklovsky tries to render the genre unfamiliar. A roughened form, such as retardation and fragmentation of the story are ways to defamiliarize the plot in the text. Accordingly, Shklovsky makes Zoo unfamiliar: he continuously interrupts the correspondence between the two writers by commenting on the letters, crossing out one of the letters, writing an epigraph and giving prefaces to some of the letters. This serves to retard the continuity of the correspondence.

Another technique Shklovsky uses in defamiliarization is defying the expectation or the presumption of the reader about the work. Shklovsky's interruptions to the correspondence defy the reader's expectation of finding some sort of privacy between the letter writers in the epistolary tradition. Even if the privacy is found, it is only an imagined privacy: the privacy which has been interfered with by other people's intentions.

While Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarization implies that a text is never wholly original, an author cannot merely imitate the other texts since the purpose of defamiliarization is to make an object seem strange. As a consequence, a work of art is at the intersection of "originality" and unoriginality. Written between 1919-22, Zoo belongs to the end of modernism. However, since modernism became a more and more familiar way of writing at that time, it was not sufficiently artistic for Shklovsky. Shklovsky defamiliarizes the form of modernism by giving Zoo a fragmented narrative and by using visual effect: he continuously comments on the correspondence between the letter writer and crosses out one of the letters with big red X-s. In doing so, Shklovsky anticipates a post-modern text.

While intertextuality in the text shows that a work of art is always influenced by other existing sources, the desire for authenticity is still strong. That desire is expressed by Shklovsky himself in his letter to Alya: "How I want simply to describe objects as if literature had never existed; that way one could write literarily" (48). This becomes an irony since of course Shklovsky cannot write outside the existence of literature. Indeed, writing is almost impossible without intertextuality, without taking some ideas from other sources.

Furthermore, while Shklovsky is well-known as the originator and leading theorist of the Formalist school, his theory derives from a

number of other sources. Shklovsky's theory of form comes from Don Quixote, in which Cervantes uses Don Quixote to make strange everything which is considered normal. Shklovsky's theory of "laying bare" the device comes from Tristram Shandy. In Theory of Prose, Shklovsky shows that his "new invention" of the theory of defamiliarization is as old as Ovid: "Why is it that, in fashioning an Art of Love out of love, Ovid counsels us not to rush into the arms of pleasure? A crooked road, a road in which the foot feels acutely the stones beneath it, a road that turns back on itself - this is the road of art" (15). Shklovsky seems to echo Ovid when he writes that the tool of art is used "in order to return sensation to our limbs, in order to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony" (Shklovsky, 1991; 6). Quoting Ovid, Shklovsky seems to admit that a "new" idea is never truly authentic. His theory, in this case, is the result of taking ideas from other sources and making them seem his.

Giving Zoo the name "The Third Heloise" is another means of showing that the text is subject to intertextuality. Like Heloise, who has to follow the epistolary genre imposed by her religious life and Abelard, Shklovsky has to follow certain forms of writing in expressing his ideas. For this reason, Shklovsky needs a "theme". Another form which he has to follow is genre, in this case the epistolary novel. The usual motivation of this form, as Shklovsky writes, is "love and partings". Following these rules, Shklovsky writes about a man in love with a woman "who has no time for him" (3). Shklovsky's submission to the form shows how his ideas are constrained by it. For this reason, he has to manipulate the form to give space to express his ideas: he sets up "a prohibition against writing about love" (3). This means that while Shklovsky is limited by the form, this form also allows him to express his ideas.

As a result, an artist is not only at the intersection of originality and unoriginality but also of freedom and unfreedom. Shklovsky writes in The Third Factory: "The dimensions of a book have always been dictated to an author. . . . A work of literature lives on material" (Shklovsky, 1977, 8). In the chapter "About the freedom of art", Shklovsky stresses this paradox: "Here the discussion seems to be about freedom. But, in fact, what is being discussed here is not freedom, but the law of contradiction" (Shklovsky, 1977; 46).

Since according to Shklovsky the purpose of art is to enable the object to be perceived differently, he shifts Heloise's role to himself, instead of to Alya, the female character. Because Alya does not want him to talk about love, Shklovsky becomes the person who waits. His role becomes similar to Heloise's and the heroines' in Ovid's Heroides. Shklovsky, in this case, takes the role which is considered to be "feminine", as Barthes states: "It is Woman who gives shape to absence, elaborates its fiction. . . . It follows that in any man who utters the other's absence something feminine is declared: this man who waits and who suffers from his waiting is miraculously feminized" (Barthes, 1985; 14). Like the other heroines, Shklovsky authenticates his feelings with tears: he is, he writes, "heavy with tears" (13). On the other hand, Alya's role becomes similar to Abelard's. She forbids the other to talk about love. She becomes the one who "sails away", she is "fickle" (Barthes, 1978; 14). Consequently, the terms feminine and masculine become subverted as the gap between them is not clear any more.

Another way in which Shklovsky defamiliarizes Heloise's and Abelard's letters is by making Alya's letters less tragic than those of Abelard. Some of her letters even sound very cheerful. Shklovsky's view of love is also defamiliarized from Heloise's. While Heloise tries

to show her submission and unlimited devotion to love in her letters to Abelard, Shklovsky is sometimes ironic and even spiteful about love. Indeed, at one stage, Shklovsky identifies with the previous literary forms whose characters mourn their fate of lost love, as he writes: "Tragic endings - at the very least, a broken heart - are inevitable in an epistolary novel" (64), and "My fate was completely predetermined" (130). However, at another stage, he distances himself from them by seeing another possibility: "But everything might have been different. Suppose I provide the romance with an alternative denouement" (130). In this case, he considers love only as a textual love, a love which is not real. His spitefulness about love is also shown by providing "an alternative denouement" through the intertextuality with a story from Andersen's fairy tales.

He cites one of Andersen's fairy tales but instead of retaining the romantic atmosphere, Shklovsky defamiliarizes the story by making the prince lack devotion and the princess lack faithfulness. The prince does not bother to make sacrifices for the princess: "On no account did the prince disguise himself as a swineherd. Instead, he borrows some money to buy silk stockings and slippers with pointed toes" (130). Just like the prince, Shklovsky's princess is not a "typical" fairy tale character either. Rather than adoring the nightingale given by the prince, the princess gives the nightingale to an instructor at the skating rink.

In making Andersen's stories his own, Shklovsky parodies Andersen. Andersen, as Shklovsky writes, "has it all wrong" (130). Instead of offering a clear conclusion, Shklovsky favours Sterne's Tristram Shandy, which ends in an incomplete action. The result is that the fairy tale is given several possible endings. The prince and princess are parodied. In one of the conclusions, "the fried fish began

to laugh" at the "absent-minded" prince (131). Another parody is shown in one version of the endings in which the princess finally lives with the prince: she "eats and sleeps in his house" but "sleeps with others" (132).

Another text which Shklovsky cites is Gulliver's Travels. Shklovsky defamiliarizes Gulliver, by adapting him to suit Shklovsky's own style and to suggest the similarity between his condition and Gulliver's: Gulliver has a telephone to contact the giant in order to tell her not to drop him to his death. The telephone becomes an important means of trying to save his life. In giving Gulliver a telephone, Shklovsky identifies his desperation for love with Gulliver's desperation for life: Shklovsky's telephone is a means of trying to save his love for Alya. In a way, Shklovsky also indicates that for him, to love is to live.

Shklovsky's mockery of the form of sentimental love and the mourning of lost love goes as far as degrading his own sentimentality. He mourns at one point: "Life tailors us for a certain person and laughs when we are drawn to someone unable to love us" (19). He then continues, showing more mockery of the idea of romantic love: "All this is simple - like postage stamps" (19). His "postage stamps" to the woman he loves are ignored: his love letters do not reach their destination.

Thus, while showing awareness of the reproducibility of the old form of love, Zoo becomes the parody of that form as well. Parody as a technique of defamiliarization is also described in Zoo in Letter Twenty-two: "I had occasion to see one other device, which has apparently been used for a long time in circuses. At the end of the show, a clown runs through all the acts, parodying and exposing them. For example, he does magic tricks standing with his back to audience,

which sees where the missing card disappeared" (82). In this case, the technique of defamiliarization makes not only the familiar strange but also the strange familiar. The clowns' device, which is supposed to be strange, becomes familiar through repetitive use. So, the clowns have to create another defamiliarization by "laying bare" the device.

Shklovsky parodies not only the epistolary tradition but also his own well-known theory of defamiliarization: "The human routine is awful, inflexible. . . . Routine we transform into anecdotes. Between the world and ourselves, we build our own little menagerie worlds" (24). Here, Shklovsky implies that the act of defamiliarization turns people into exhibits in a zoo. The mockery of his own theory suggests that a form is created by parodying the already-old-existing form. Accordingly, a form considered new is actually a parody of a parody. Similarly, the intertextuality of a text is an intertextuality of an intertextuality. Barthes states that a text is "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes, 1977; 146). As a consequence, the text acts upon other texts as well as being acted upon by other texts.

The technique of defamiliarization makes intertextuality paradoxical. The work of art comes from other sources, but to render the work perceptible, the artist has to make it different. As a consequence, while intertextuality seems to identify with the other sources, it also distances itself from them. Being in intertextuality with the selves from other stories, Shklovsky identifies with the characters as well as distancing himself from them by making them unfamiliar from the "original" form. By defamiliarizing the other characters, Shklovsky makes the stories closer to what he intends. Of course, if Shklovsky had left the story of Andersen in the "original" form, the reader would not have seen any theory which could be considered

Shklovsky's. Similarly, in defamiliarizing Gulliver's Travels, if Shklovsky did not give Gulliver a phone, the connection between Gulliver and Shklovsky the anguished lover would not be clear. The paradox is that while Shklovsky distances himself from the characters of the other texts, they get closer to him. All of these factors lead to a lot of contradictions, since while using a mask, Shklovsky reveals it; while lamenting his anguish, he laughs at it; while seemingly being sincere about love, he mocks it; while using a device, he "lays bare" the device.

Intertextuality of the self.

Since a text is always in the process of intertextuality, the representation of the self in the text can never be entirely authentic either. One's self is always influenced by the existence of the other's self, by way of comparison and contrast. The presence and action of other people have reactive effects on the way one constructs or represents oneself. R.D. Laing states:

> I may not actually be able to see myself as others see me, but I am constantly supposing them to be seeing me in particular ways, and I am constantly acting in the light of the actual or supposed attitudes, opinions, needs, and so on the other has in respect of me (Laing, 1966; 4).

As a result, the "I" is involved with the other, that is with "you, he, she, it, we, they". In other words, the self is in intertextuality with the other's self.

The complementary nature of one's self and its involvement with the other's self in the epistolary tradition is also realized by J. G. Altman. She argues: "The *I* of the epistolary discourse . . . ; his locus,

his "address" [are] always relative to that of his addressee" (Altman,1982;119); the letter, therefore, is written to be read. Even if the addressee does not really exist (like Celie's "God" in The Color Purple), the addresser still imagines the letter will be read by someone. Writing, then, is presenting one's self in another's presence. Thus, the writer's "I" is never definite, since it is posited in relation with the "you" in the letter.

The irony is that while Shklovsky tries to please Alya by thinking about what Alya thinks of him, he does not think about the "real" Alya. He only thinks about his perception of Alya. So, Shklovsky merely thinks what he thinks about Alya. On the other hand, while Alya thinks about Shklovsky, she does not think about the "real" him but she thinks what she thinks about him. The statement "Shklovsky thinks about what Alya thinks" can be more fully stated as "Shklovsky thinks about what he thinks about what Alya thinks about what she thinks about what he thinks about..., and so on". This produces an infinite regression of thought. Thus, when one thinks of his/her identity, this "within-ness" contains the reflection of the "within-ness" of the other.

Since Shklovsky merely thinks about what he thinks of Alya, his behaviour or reaction is dependent on his construction of Alya, not of the "real" Alya. While Shklovsky accepts Alya's letter, he will try to find out what she thinks about his letter and the unending intertextuality of the selves begins. This allows him to be deceived or even to deceive himself. That Shklovsky only thinks about what he thinks about Alya is hinted in that Alya's letters do not provide the response he really waits for: her declaration of love. Although Shklovsky states how in love and obsessed with her he is: "I love you very much. . . I have wound my whole life around the thought of

you" (14), Alya does not want him to write about love: "Don't write to me about love. . . . Don't rant and rave. You're managing to poison my days" (15).

Compared with Shklovsky's abundant letters which show his dedication and obsession for her, Alya writes only seven, which may imply her indifference towards him. In her last letter, Alya even asks him to "quit writing about how, how, how much you love me, because at the third "how much," I start thinking about something else" (101). Alya's complaint about Shklovsky's declaration of love parallels his criticism of habitualization. Because his declaration of love has been used over and over again, it is becoming familiar. So, it does not appeal to her senses but becomes "meaningless" (24).

The involvement of one's self with the other's is further explained by Jean-Paul Sartre: "In so far as I make a world exist as a complex instrument which I use for the ends of my human reality, I cause myself to be determined in my being by a being who makes the world exist as a complex of instruments for the ends of his reality" (Sartre, 1984; 246). Accordingly, one's self-identity is influenced by the other's identities. The other allows one to feel the validity of one's identity. As a result, one may try to impose a certain identity on the other in order to produce an identity for him/herself, as Laing explains: a person "may try to establish an identity for himself by achieving a particular identity for the other" (Laing, 1966; 109). Thus, Shklovsky tries to make Alya love him (to be his lover), so he can feel that he is the person he wants to be (Alya's lover).

So, there is a process of mirroring in the act of love: Alya becomes Shklovsky's look to project his self. However, this projection must coincide with the projection that Shklovsky expects. Since Alya rejects his love letter, Shklovsky constructs a strategy of writing to

seduce her and make her the person he expects her to be. Shklovsky's process of seduction leads to a confusion: that of the genre of the self and the text.

Genre of the text and the self: Are these letters about love or not?

On seduction, Sartre states, "I do not try to reveal my subjectivity to the Other. . . . I could do so only by looking at the other" (Sartre, 1982; 371). Thus, Shklovsky tries not to pronounce his desire to be Alya's lover. Instead, he tries to please her by following her prohibition on talking about love. He writes: "I'm not going to write about love" (16). So, he writes about his observations of the conditions in Berlin and Russia, art and literature, and the life of Russian writers instead. His obedience to Alya, though, is superficial. Like Heloise's discourse, Shklovsky's is also marked by manipulation. While Heloise is recognized as a devoted nun in her society, this appearance is only a manoeuvre masking her passion for Abelard.

Nevertheless, Sartre continues that while the seducer tries not to reveal his subjectivity, this is only a strategy to "cause the Other's subjectivity to disappear, and it is exactly this which I [the lover] want to assimilate" (Sartre, 1982; 371). For this reason, while Shklovsky states that this is a letter "not about love", behind that, he still tries to seduce Alya with his words. This raises another question of authenticity: his letter "not about love" implies a "letter about love". Shklovsky tries to impress her with his description of the nice weather, the sun, cool Berlin; descriptions which are almost romantic: "I'm going to write only about the weather. The weather in Berlin is nice today, The sky is blue, the sun higher than the houses. . . . Outdoors,

it's nice and cool" (16). At the same time, he reminds Alya of his obedience: "I'm still writing not about love" (16). Thus, while suppressing his identity as a man in love, he tries to persuade Alya to accept his love: his suppression of his subjectivity becomes a suppression of Alya's subjectivity.

To seduce, Sartre explains further, is "to put myself beneath his look and to make him look at me" (Sartre, 1982; 371). Seduction then is the mixture of humility and violence. The intention of seduction is to make the beloved project the identity that the lover wants. At the same time, this other's projection of the lover must become the identity that the other wants. The lover will not be satisfied if the other's love for him is only the result of his force, of her insincerity. For this reason, the lover will try to get sympathy from the beloved. Lowering himself in front of Alya is one of Shklovsky's strategies: "I lay at your feet like a rug, Alya!" (75).

In another letter, Shklovsky shows how much he realizes that he is worthless to Alya by comparing himself with her rubbish. However, while degrading himself, he also shows how much he tries to come to life again for her: "Only I, torn and shredded like a letter, keep climbing out of the wastebasket [sic] for your broken toys. . . every day you tear me up and every night I revive, like the letters" (48). The first part of the sentence ("torn and shredded like a letter") is a way to gain pity from her. The next part shows his decisiveness ("every night I revive") which can be quite intimidating. However, since the first part arouses pity, this intimidation might even arouse sympathy. The force he uses to make Alya be what he wants is masked by his humbleness.

Next, Shklovsky writes about the Apostle Peter, who denies Christ. Shklovsky justifies Peter, who disobeys one form of authority

(Christ) to follow another form (public opinion) because of the condition (the weather), not through ill-will: "It's just as well that Christ wasn't crucified in Russia. Our climate is continental - severe cold and blizzards; the disciples of Christ would have flocked to the fires at the intersections and would have stood in line to deny Him" (17). In this case, Shklovsky inserts his reflections on the Russians in writing letters to Alya. In that period, the First World War, revolution, and civil war made conditions in Russia really severe. Because of this, more than three million Russians were driven from their native land. Most of them flocked from the "severe cold and blizzards" of Russia to the alien fire, Berlin. Identifying with Peter, Shklovsky mourns his success in publishing books in Germany and sees it as betrayal: "Forgive me, Velimir Khlebnikov, for warming myself at the fire of alien editorial offices. For publishing my book, and not yours" (17).

Shklovsky identifies Khlebnikov with Jesus. Both die as a victim of country and society. Here, Shklovsky does not seem to blame Russia for Khlebnikov's death. He even writes that "The Roman soldiers who pierced the hands of Christ are no more guilty than the nails" (18). D.G.B Piper points out that Shklovsky, who considered "it inevitable that the state should neglect and reject the heretical visionary, absolved it of blame for his death"(Piper, 1970; 1). In addition, Victor Erlich argues that in this text, Shklovsky states that he "had symbolically 'surrendered' to the powers that be" (Erlich, 1969; 136). However, while not blaming the Roman soldiers and the nails, Shklovsky compares the victim to Christ, a symbol of holiness, and shows the victim's suffering: "All the same, those being crucified feel much pain" (18). Shklovsky also implies the cruelty of the Russian government when he mentions the massacre of surrendered Turkish

soldiers (p. 104). This, in a way, suggests what might happen to him if he surrenders. Therefore, to think that Zoo is Shklovsky's expression of his submissiveness to the power of the Russian government might not be appropriate.

At the same time, his descriptions of Russia and Berlin become a metaphor for love. Betrayal of the other is the lover's primary fear. The story of Peter's betrayal can be the manifestation of Shklovsky's fear of Alya's betrayal. Shklovsky's effort to get Alya's attention and his fear of her betrayal show that the statement "I love someone" means "I love someone who loves me". So, Shklovsky's love is a love to be loved, his longing is a longing to be longed for. In his last letter, Shklovsky admits that while describing many other things, his letters are still love letters: "All my letters are about 'how much' I love you" (132). The question of masquerade becomes more complicated, as what is masked becomes unclear: is Shklovsky's idea about Berlin and Russia masked in the love letters or are the love letters masked in his discussion of Berlin and Russia? It is therefore hard to define Shklovsky's self in the text: is he a lover or not?

Shklovsky's self in the text becomes full of contradiction, for while inserting the condition of the Russians into the letters of a man in love, Shklovsky also inserts his declaration of love into the story of Peter and Jesus. Writing at first that the nails piercing Jesus's hands are like the ignorance of human love which can make people like Khlebnikov suffer, Shklovsky connects this "love" with amorous love: "Love is like the nails used to pierce hands" (20). He ends the letter by commenting how men's entire civilization is "built by us on the way to love" (20). This statement can be read as a means of impressing Alya with the idea of how sincerely he thinks about love, yet it too can be read as merely another kind of seduction. The torn and shredded letter

and the pierced hands are like Shklovsky's split subjectivity. Like these objects, his self is fragmented and in confusion. There is a strong desire to find a unity as he tries to "revive", but this unity cannot be found anywhere in the text.

The ambiguity of Shklovsky's self is manifested when Shklovsky selects a different "I", as he changes the addressee from Alya to "the All Russian Central Executive Committee". In his letters to Alya, the "I" is the anguished lover who waits for Alya, his beloved. In his letter to the Russian Central Executive Committee, he tries to emphasize that Alya is only an image of his loneliness and misery in Berlin since he intends to go back to Russia:

> Don't be surprised that this letter follows some letters written to a woman.
>
> I'm not getting a love affair involved in this matter. The woman I was writing never existed. . . . Alya is the realization of a metaphor. I invented a woman and love in order to make a book about understanding, about alien people, about an alien land. I want to go back to Russia" (103).

What he thinks of as the eyes of the All Russian C.E. Committee makes him establish a new "I". The "I" here is not Shklovsky the lover again, but Shklovsky the submissive Russian: "I raise my arm and surrender" (104). In this letter, the lover even denies his own beloved, stating that she exists only in his imagination to impress how sincerely he misses Russia. Alya becomes the imaginative form which is created out of his loneliness in a foreign land. At the same time, Alya can also be a means of enabling Shklovsky to write about and criticize the Russian government.

The reader may feel cheated. Everything seems to contradict everything else. Which is the metaphor, then: love, or his story about Russia and Berlin? Which one is hidden? Which masks which? What is the genre of his letters: love letters or non-love letters? Is Shklovsky a lover? His letters not about love mask his seduction. However, his love to Alya masks his loneliness in Berlin and his criticism of the Russian government. This confusion can never be resolved. Shklovsky's letters not about love mask his letters about love. At the same time, his letters about love mask his letters not about love.

The ambiguity of the genre of the self and the text can be described as follows:

> Shklovsky states that he creates a woman to make a book about an alien land and Russia. In order to do so, Shklovsky pretends to be in love with Alya. Unfortunately, he is not quite successful since Alya asks him not to write about love.
>
> So, in his letters, Shklovsky pretends not to be in love with Alya by writing her letters not about love. Thus, his pretence *not to be in love* masks his pretence *to be in love.*
> In other words, his letters *not about love* mask his letters *about love* .
>
> However, if he pretends not to be in love with Alya, his criticism of the Russian government will be made explicit and can endanger him, and in addition he will feel lonely again. As a consequence, he has to imagine that he is in love with her: "I have to remind myself that I am in love with her so that I am not lonely".
>
> So, he pretends to be in love with Alya by inserting letters about love while pretending not to write about it. In this case, he pretends to be in love while pretending not to be in love. Thus, his pretence *to be in love* masks his pretence *not to be in love.*
> In other words, while his letters *not about love* mask his letters *about love,* his letters *about love* mask his letters *not about love.*

So, which one is actually the mask? What is the genre of the text: love letters or non-love letters? What is the genre of Shklovsky's self: a lover or not? Presumably, Shklovsky creates this confusion to defamiliarize the reader's presumption of the "essence" of the self in the text by muddling up the contrast between one genre and the other.

Shklovsky's different roles as the author, the editor, the lover, as well as the commentator[2] of his text also reflect his split self, since a person can posit him/herself differently. Here, Shklovsky's deflection of the "essence" of the self is demonstrated further in that these roles contradict each other and cannot be distinguished clearly. At one point, for instance, Shklovsky the commentator empathizes with Shklovsky the lover, even identifying himself as the lover by using the word "I". However, at another point, Shklovsky the commentator is detached from and even cynical towards Shklovsky the lover.

His detachment from the lover can be seen in his comments on "Letter One". In this letter, Alya writes to her sister in Moscow. She writes without compassion about the men who are in love with her: "The same men are still attached to me and show no signs of abandoning their posts" (11). Apart from that, she also writes about the peacefulness of her existence in Berlin. Instead of sympathizing with the men who are in love with Alya (one of whom appears to be Shklovsky), Shklovsky the commentator merely notes Alya's contentedness: "Just listen to the calm voice" (11). This is in contrast with the suffering of Shklovsky the rejected lover.

In another letter, he distances himself from Shklovsky the lover by selecting the pronoun "he" (the author of the letter), instead of "I": "the author attempts to be light-hearted and cheerful, but I know for sure that in the next letter he won't be able to carry it off" (37). Instead of getting involved with the lover's emotional state, Shklovsky analyzes him and pronounces his action a masquerade. The subject then splits into opposing parts. This opposition continues when, after

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[2] What I mean by "commentator" here, is that Shklovsky always writes a few lines before each letter. He summarizes what the letter is about, gives information on where the letter is from and who it is for, and comments on the addresser, addressee or on the content of the letter.

introducing "Letter Twenty-two", Shklovsky makes a cynical comment about the letter:

> Unexpected and, in my opinion, utterly superfluous. The content of this letter obviously escaped from some other book by the same author, but perhaps the compiler of the book deemed the letter indispensable for reasons of variety (79).

The commentator becomes quite sarcastic about the emotional nature of the letter written by the lover. The confusion as to whether the commentator is the same person as the lover or different shows that one's self can split into several identities. Shklovsky's two different pronouns ("I" and "he") also imply that a person can play at being someone else but also at being himself. "Being himself" is just another form of masquerade. Being himself means that the mask becomes like himself, the mask is put on his likeness. In empathizing with Shklovsky the lover, Shklovsky the commentator loses himself in being someone he thinks he is in what he thinks he does, so that he seems to become "himself", and thus calls himself "I".

The paradoxical split nature of the word "I" is further explored by Roman Jakobson. The word "I" cannot represent the object without the connection to the self who utters that word. However, this word also functions as an index pointing out an object, which means that the word *I* cannot represent its object "without 'being in existential relation'" (Jakobson, 1971; 132) with the object. Thus, when the person speaks about himself, he identifies with as well as distances himself from himself. "I" is both the subject of enunciation (the one who writes) and the enounced (the one who is written).

The contradiction in Shklovsky's self can also be seen when he crosses out Alya's letter. He writes in the preface to this letter: "Skip it

and read it after you've finished the book" (70). However, while disallowing the reading of Alya's letter, he provides an opportunity for the reader to read it. He crosses out the letter with two big red crosses in such a way that the reader can still read the whole letter easily. By doing that, Shklovsky implies that prohibition is like censorship, it can make one's curiosity even stronger.

At the same time, the crossing out of the letter can act as a satire on Russian censorship. When Zoo was written, the Russian government censored everything that was not politically correct. Despite Shklovsky's criticism of censorship, some parts of Zoo were still censored for political reasons. However, as Shklovsky recognizes, this actually encouraged Russian writers to criticize their government and to retrieve lost or "censored" texts. Shklovsky's crossing out of Alya's letter can also act as a mockery of her prohibition as while asking the reader not to read it, he informs us that: "Alya's letter is the best one in the whole book" (70). It seems that Shklovsky's prohibition is designed to tempt the reader, just like Alya asks Shklovsky not to write about love and ends up inciting him to try to seduce her.

The blurring of Shklovsky's roles in the book can also be seen in his "Preface to Letter Nineteen". This preface seems to be a letter from Shklovsky the lover to the public reader, since like other letters, it begins with a small comment from the editor. But in the letter itself, Shklovsky states that he has pruned Alya's letter, which means that he speaks as the editor. At the same time, he also writes from the position of the author, who can give "a second interpretation of the woman I've been writing to; in addition, I'm providing a second interpretation of myself" (71). The authorial position is emphasized by mentioning the date when he finished writing the text: "I read Alya's letter only recently, on March 10, after I had already finished writing the book"

(70). Since he mentions finishing the book, is "I" here the author? But if he is Shklovsky the author, why did he kiss Alya's letter: "I didn't read it when it first arrived. I did kiss it and I skimmed certain passages" (70)? If he is the lover, why does he mention finishing the book and write that Alya's letter is the best one in his novel (which may imply that he has written it)? Moreover, does anyone believe that an impatient lover would put off reading a letter from his beloved for such a long time? So, who is talking now? Shklovsky as an author, as a lover, as a commentator, or as an editor? Does Elsa Triolet exist? Who writes Alya's letters? Elsa Triolet or Shklovsky? Because Shklovsky's roles contradict each other, the reader cannot reach the "essence" of the self. In other words, the effort of defining Shklovsky's self becomes futile.

Between fact and fiction.

Since a self is never wholly original, the sentiment of love, which is considered personal, cannot avoid intertextuality either. La Rochefoucauld questions the authenticity of love by stating: "There is only one love, and a thousand copies of it" (cited in Kauffman, 1986; 94). That Shklovsky's love follows a pre-programmed pattern is implied in one of his letters: "Love has its own methods, its own logic - set moves established without consulting either me or us" (64). Shklovsky makes his love a means of applying his theory of art by stressing the unoriginality of love and thus defamiliarizing the reader's presumption about "fact" and fiction. Some readers may still assume that "fact" can be separated from fiction, but Shklovsky implies that the two are inseparably intertwined.

Shklovsky shows the unoriginality of love by identifying himself with Heloise. His love derives from inductions: from another text, another book, and also language. Because of this contagion, fiction and "reality" are in the intertextuality with each other so that one cannot be separated from the other. Love becomes the result of the imagination of it. Not only is fiction the product of life, but life also the product of fiction. Barthes comments: "[t]his 'affective contagion', this induction, proceeds from others, from language, from books, from friends: no love is original" (Barthes, 1978; 136).

Like any other lover, Shklovsky is obsessed with the other's image. His obsession with Alya makes him count the time: "I haven't seen you now for two days (13), "I have your permission to telephone at 10:30. Four and a half hours, then another twenty empty hours. . . . I can divide the waiting into hours and minutes; I can count them" (47, 49). He tries to project her in other objects he sees: "You are the city I live in; you are the name of the month and the day" (13).

Shklovsky manipulates Alya's absence by creating his own theatre. Barthes recognizes this conduct: "There is a scenography of waiting: I organize it, manipulate it, cut out a portion of time in which I shall mime the loss of the loved object and provoke all the effects of a minor mourning" (37). Shklovsky produces this "scenography of waiting" by creating Alya's image; he talks to her, he watches her: "Ladies promenade in their sealskin coats and heavy leather, high-button shoes; you, Alya, in your mouse-colored, seal-trimmed coat, walk among them" (66). In this case, Shklovsky creates what Barthes calls "the Image-repertoire" (10-11). Since Shklovsky continuously reflects Alya's self, he acquires a double personality encompassing himself and Alya. Alya's self becomes more or less fictive since it

exists as a reflection of Shklovsky's. It is the "artfulness" of Alya which is more important than Alya herself.

In the act of love, barriers, such as separation of the lovers, become part of the pleasure, the challenge. They make love sweeter, "the stone, stony" (Shklovsky, 1991; 6). Although they obstruct love, barriers may become the motivation of desire. They renew the perception of passion and love, and defamiliarize the routine: "'Eros is often sweeter when he is being difficult'" (Carson, 1986; 21). The subjects of the discourse of desire, as a consequence, are not just two, but three: the addresser, the addressee, and the barrier (or absence). Shklovsky writes in the absence of Alya. The fewer the meetings, the more he writes: when "we meet less and less often", "[m]y whole life is a letter to you" (27). Alya's absence and rejection make the drama of writing and reproduction continue.

Shklovsky creates and recreates not only Alya's image but also his own: "I float, salty and heavy with tears, barely keeping my head above water. I seem to be sinking, but even there, underwater - where the phone doesn't ring and rumors don't reach, where it's impossible to meet you - I will go on loving you" (13). He fuses his identity with the other, surrenders his boundaries: "I've come to understand so many simple words: yearn, perish, burn" (27). This engulfing shows another fictiveness of one's self: his identity is not "original" or "real" but merely the "Outburst of annihilation which affects the amorous subject in despair or fulfilment" (Barthes, 1978; 10).

Having implied the inauthenticity of love, Shklovsky questions whether his desire is merely the product of writing about it: "I pronounced the word "love" and set the whole thing in motion. The game began. And I no longer know where love ends and the book begins" (64). His love for Alya becomes part of the fiction and his love

is not loving the object but loving his imagination and the description of his desire. In this way, Shklovsky becomes another Narcissus who projects his image in something else. He sees himself in Alya, in the imagination of love and in the text he writes. Consequently, Shklovsky's "reality" of the self becomes ambivalent: his self is only the result of his reflecting himself everywhere else.

The "reality" of Shklovsky's self becomes ambiguous when Shklovsky makes the reader aware of the editing of his own letters. In commenting on each of the letters and crossing out one of Alya's letters, Shklovsky shows that reading is never free from rereading. The rereading can decode a new message from the previous reading. As a result, a rereading can produce a re-writing. This shows how various the interpretation of the reader can be, as Barthes comments: "To do a second writing of the first writing of the work is indeed to open the way to unforeseeable relaying of meaning, the endless play of mirrors, and it is this room for manoeuvre which is suspect" (33).

In crossing out Alya's letter, Shklovsky illustrates that the editor can have a big part in shaping the interpretation of a collection of letters. The epistolary tradition, Derrida writes, is like "a police station affair" (Derrida, 1980; 144). The editor acts as the agent for the police, who tries to regulate, rearrange, and even arrest the letters; as Shklovsky writes, "the crucial sections were pruned by the proofreader" (71). Thus, Derrida comments in The Post Card:

> You might read these envois as the preface to a book that I have not written. . . . I do not know if their reading is bearable. You might consider them, if you really wish to, as the remainders of a recently destroyed correspondence. Destroyed by fire or by that which figuratively takes its place, more certain of leaving nothing out of the reach of what I like to

> call the tongue of fire, not even cinders if cinders there are (Derrida, 1980; 3).

This shows that letters can be considered as fragments of a destroyed correspondence. When the addresser translates his intentions into writing, there are always layers of obstruction which prevent the intentions of the writer from being expressed. Language and the form of writing are parts of these obstructions.

In addition, as is explained in the previous chapter, letters can be subjects to omission, edition, forgery, and manipulation. For instance, Elsa Triolet's letter is crossed out by Shklovsky, and Shklovsky's texts were censored by the Russian government. Furthermore, Shklovsky and Alya also have other means of communication besides the letters: they meet and phone. Consequently, the record of the couple's relationship we get from the letters is partial. To define the "real" writer's self out of his/her writing will be unavailing.

Shklovsky himself expresses doubt that writing can describe the real self of the author. In The Young Tolstoy, he writes:

> It is a serious mistake to use diaries to explain the way a work of literature comes into being. There is a hidden lie here - as though a writer creates and writes all by himself and not in conjunction with his genre and all of literature, with its conflicting tendencies. . . . Moreover, diaries lead us into the psychology of the creative process and the question of the laboratory of genius, when what we need is the thing. The relation between the thing and its creator is also non-functional" (cited in Sheldon, 1977; xiv).

Emphasizing that the text is a process of production and influenced by the technique of art, Shklovsky asks about the effect of the pruning of Alya's letter: "What is the structural function of this letter? After all, it is included" (71). Shklovsky questions the reader's

expectation concerning the plot and asks: "why the devil do you want structure?" (71). He then appears to answer these questions:

> You insist? Then allow me! To make a work ironic, you need a double interpretation of the action, which is achieved by the technique of reduction - in Evgenii Onegin, for example, by the phrase "But is he not a parody?" In my book, though, I'm using the technique of enhancement to give a second interpretation of the woman I've been writing to; in addition, I'm providing a second interpretation of myself. . . . If you believe my explanation of the structure, then you will also have to believe that the letter ascribed to Alya was written by me. That would not be wise. . . . (71).

Shklovsky questions the reader's pattern of reading which usually searches for a certain structure and a single centre of authority or authenticity in the novel. However, he does not want to give clear directions on how to read the text. While answering his own question of structure, Shklovsky points out another ambiguity by showing that the reader can produce several interpretations of the text. The answer, accordingly, produces irresolution.

Shklovsky further reveals his emotional description of his anguish to be superficial by quantifying it: "Sorrow comes to see me. I talk to him while inwardly counting up pages. There are only a hundred pages or so. Such a brief sorrow!" (129). This theatricality makes us aware that Shklovsky himself is the object of his artistic device. That he himself becomes an object of art is made clear as Shklovsky "lays bare" the device he uses, by admitting his own fictiveness: "I am completely bewildered, Alya! This is the problem: I'm writing letters to you and, at the same time, I'm writing a book. And what's in the book and what's in life have gotten hopelessly jumbled" (64). As a result, what seems real (his sincere love and desire

for Alya, and his anguish) is undercut. Instead of something factual, his own self, love and sorrow become part of his fiction. Thus, we are reminded of the fictiveness of our existence.

The inseparability of fact and fiction is implied again, when Shklovsky shows the process he goes through in expressing his idea in the preface of the text:

> This book was written in the following way. Originally, I planned to do a series of essays on Russian Berlin; then it seemed a good idea to connect these essays with some sort of general theme. I took for my theme "Menagerie" ("Zoo"); thus the title of the book was born, but it failed to connect the pieces. Then came the idea of making some sort of epistolary novel out of them (3).

This statement is suggestive of a close relationship between fact and fiction. At first, the novel comes out of something more "real": a series of essays on Russia and Berlin. However, this does not work. So, Shklovsky decides to turn it into an epistolary fiction.

The blurring between fiction and "reality" is illustrated by the story "The Fire and the Ants". The story is about ants whose house is on fire. The ants run away from their burning house. However, many of them come back to their "deserted native land" and die there. That the story is fictive is emphasized by the word "Tales" below it. However, this story reflects something which is considered more "real", that is, the condition of those Russians who deserted their homeland because of the miserable conditions. On the other hand, the history of Russia is treated as a story. The life of Russian artists such as Andrei Bely, Marc Chagall, Boris Pasternak, and Velimir Khlebnikov, the political condition in Berlin and Russia, and the existence of the intellectual group "Smena Vekh" become part of Shklovsky's fictive

letters to Alya. Since history can be treated as a story, Shklovsky's description of his past can be the subject of revision. In the preface to the third edition of Zoo, he writes: "My dear past - you did exist. . . . Live on, old friend, I will not revise you" (109-10). Thus, the self and writing about it are not facts but a way of thinking about and representing "facts".

Shklovsky's addressee(s) and Kauffman's argument.

Alya's letters in Zoo are considered to be real letters written by Elsa Triolet. Since Shklovsky is the editor of Elsa Triolet's letters, Shklovsky can be viewed as the reader as well as the writer of Elsa's letters. At the same time, Zoo can be considered as a long letter to the public reader. However, if Shklovsky's self becomes fragmented and manipulated, what becomes of that of his addressee(s)? Previously, I talked about how a self is acting upon and acted upon by the other. Accordingly, in an epistolary relationship, the letters are "the result of a union of writer and reader" (Altman, 1982; 88). The writer seeks to affect the reader and is affected by him/her.

Moreover, a letter writer is also a letter reader, and vice versa. While becoming a reader, I also become a writer. So, when I analyze Shklovsky's reaction to Alya, my writing is in intertextuality with Shklovsky's text. In other words, my opinion is based on Shklovsky's writing and influenced by his intention, but the content of his intention and writing are influenced by and interpreted from my perspective. When I talk about Shklovsky's and Alya's selves, I am aware only of my interpretation of them since I cannot have "exactly" the same world as they have. Every reading becomes rereading, and writing becomes rewriting.

As discussed earlier, Alya is the metaphor for Shklovsky's loneliness in Berlin. So, Alya is also a projection of Shklovsky's self. What we read is not the "real" Alya, but Shklovsky's projection of himself on her. Like Narcissus, who sees his own image and thinks it another person's, Shklovsky sees Alya as another person, but she is only a projection of himself. Elsa Triolet becomes an "Alya" for Shklovsky. His letters to Alya also become letters to himself: Shklovsky's solicitude for Alya is targeted at himself.

Putting Elsa Triolet's letters into his text is another way in which Shklovsky defamiliarizes the expectation of privacy in letter writings. He makes seven of Elsa Triolet's letters, which are considered "personal", public. The reader is prompted to wonder whether Elsa realizes that her letters are part of Shklovsky's novel in the making. Her first letter is actually not directed at Shklovsky but at her sister in Berlin. This letter is offered as an introduction, and can be joined nicely to the text since it is about similar topics: Berlin and the men in love with Alya. The presence of Alya's letter to her sister in Zoo means that she either kept the copy of her letter to her sister and gave it to Shklovsky, or she took the letter from her sister and gave it to Shklovsky, or her sister gave it to Shklovsky. Another possibility is that she had written the letter and never sent it to her sister since she intended to make the letter part of Shklovsky's fiction, especially because of the clear connection between the letter addressed to her sister and the letters addressed to Shklovsky.

None of Elsa's seven letters mentions her awareness of Shklovsky's text. However, we cannot be sure that she does not know just because she does not mention it, since letters provide an incomplete picture. They cannot record all the writer thinks and feels. Another factor which creates ambiguity is that Elsa's letters have been

edited by Shklovsky. Some parts of the letters might have been rewritten or cut out. Additionally, Elsa Triolet may have agreed to act as one of the characters in the novel: to maintain the "reality" and veracity of the fiction, she has to pretend in her letters that what she writes is not part of the fiction, and therefore she does not mention Shklovsky's fiction in the making. Even though Alya does not acknowledge Shklovsky's novel in her letters, there is a possibility that Elsa collaborated in the production of the text as the three Marias did in The New Portuguese Letters. So, Elsa Triolet may have written "real fictive" letters. This creates another ambiguity between "fact" and fiction.

In Zoo, Shklovsky the lover continually stereotypes women. Rejected by Alya, Shklovsky relates Alya's self to the European culture and society he dislikes. Becoming the object who waits, Shklovsky feels alienated by Alya. While the "I" is "inter-involved" with the other's self, the other is inter-involved with many others as well. Shklovsky's perception of Alya is related to other factors: to his anguish of being in Berlin, to the materialism in Europe and to the fairy tale's princess who gives the prince's gift for her to the skating teacher. As a consequence, women and the European mentality are portrayed in parallel, and opposed to the Russians: Shklovsky describes the European mentality as "the store mentality" which is "destroying us" (41). He accuses Alya of being materialistic in embracing a European way of life: "So I'm writing about an alien culture and an alien woman. The woman is perhaps not totally alien. I'm not complaining about you, Alya. But you are an utter woman". Later, he describes an "utter woman" as a woman who "flirts with the things in the store: she likes everything. That's the European mentality" (40).

Nonetheless, Alya's "alien-ness" enables Shklovsky to write. In Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarization, an object is made strange, so Shklovsky writes not to someone familiar, but to someone foreign. Alya is "a person from an alien culture, because there's no point in writing descriptive letters to a person of your own culture" (4). In this matter, Alya becomes an object of artistic device, of writing. She becomes a means of enabling Shklovsky to apply his theory on an epistolary text and on the discourse of love. Shklovsky's letters become the writing of anguish, which is also addressed to the paper, the void, and others.

In parallel, Elsa's identity becomes as undecidable as Shklovsky's: while writing to her, Shklovsky seduces the public reader with his love story, loneliness in Berlin, and his literary theory; and obsessively quantifying his love story, Shklovsky makes love with literature by his romantic artistry with Alya as the written object. For these reasons, Alya's self cannot avoid the intertextuality of the other's self: of Shklovsky's, of the public reader's, and of society and culture (literature). Shklovsky's letter to Alya becomes a letter addressed to himself, to Alya, to the public reader, to society, culture, and literature.

Relating Alya to his view of other women, including the demanding and unfaithful princess in the fairy tale, renders Shklovsky the tormented lover to generalize about women as materialistic: "What do women need from us? What do they want? I would have done anything. I would have written differently. Maybe fame is necessary?" (19). The letters then become a means of revenge. Alya becomes the embodiment of the bourgeoisie, of Shklovsky's anguish in a foreign country, of his loneliness, of his anger with his condition.

But these sorts of hatred and anger also push him to write since Alya is the woman he loves. Just as Shklovsky's humility is another

form of violence, love is another side of hatred. His letters to Alya overflow her desk, purse and apartment. Thus, Lovelace writes in Clarissa: "I have written . . . upon . . . REVENGE, which I love; upon LOVE, which I hate, heartily hate, because 'tis my master: And upon the devil knows what besides" (221-22).

Alya's letters, however, often contradict Shklovsky's depiction of her as a materialistic woman. In Alya's letter to her sister, Alya writes that her apartment in Berlin is "the sort of place you avoid if at all possible. My acquaintances from the Kurfurstendamm will not be casually dropping in!" (11). Her letter also hints that she likes working hard: "I miss London: the solitude, the measured life, the work from morning till night" (12). Instead of giving the impression that she is lured by European lights and shopping, she indicates that she is aware of some poor social conditions in Berlin: "there is so much misery here that you can't put it out of your mind even for a minute" (12).

Rejecting Shklovsky's description of her as a malicious woman who wants him to be a lamb, "the substitute sacrifice", Alya writes that she is a woman who has the potentiality of being childishly innocent: "I'm no femme fatale. I'm Alya, pink and fluffy" (31). In her fourth letter, she even admits that she is "good for nothing; no need to insist on that" (60). In her letter from Tahiti, she lowers herself by saying: "I have no sense when it comes to events and places; no idea of the number of inhabitants, or facts" (76). Of those descriptions, Linda S. Kauffman writes in Special Delivery that "Elsa is down to earth" (Kauffman, 1985; 46). Such a conclusion is quite surprising. While stating that the gap between fiction and fact is not clear, Kauffman's comment implies that she still believes in the authenticity of Alya's letters. She takes it for granted that Alya's descriptions picture Elsa's self.

At some points, Alya does seem to be "down to earth"; at other points though, she can seem quite narcissistic and even arrogant. In her letter from Tahiti, for example, it seems that she enjoys writing "about myself - for you [Shklovsky]" (78). In this letter, while telling him that she lacks the ability to describe her surroundings, she writes wonderfully about what she "see[s] and feel[s]" (76): the sea, the people, and her little horse Tanyusha. In addition, she can proudly state in the other letter: "Wherever I go, I know immediately what goes with what and who with whom" (101). While saying that she "doesn't know a lot about literature", Alya writes that she "know[s] a lot about love letters" (101). She also criticizes Shklovsky: "you certainly don't know how to write a love letter. And you're becoming more pesky all the time. When you write about love, you choke on your own lyricism and froth at the mouth" (101). Stating that Elsa Triolet is "down to earth" then becomes too one-sided.

Kauffman also claims that Elsa "invalidates the feminine stereotypes upon which he [Shklovsky] relies" (Kauffman, 1985; 46). Kauffman later writes that "the most revealing aspect of their correspondence comes in Letter 19" since in this letter Shklovsky rejects Alya's attempt to differentiate "Woman (as mythical lover and mother) from *women*, in all their specificity and complexity" (Kauffman, 1985; 49) by crossing out the letter. In this letter, by writing about her wet nurse, Stesha, Alya describes the difference between a woman who is traditional and submissive to men, and a woman who is not. As a result of being a "traditional" woman, Stesha is pregnant several times. Her life is full of childbirth, wet-nursing, and sacrifice. Kauffman states that Shklovsky's crossing out the letter shows that he "fails to differentiate women from Woman" (Kauffman, 1985; 51).

In saying this, Kauffman forgets that despite crossing out the letter, Shklovsky still gives the reader the chance to read what he crossed out. The inclusion of Alya's "prohibited" letter in the text suggests that Shklovsky wants the letter to be read because it produces dialogical contest, that is the text consists of irreconcilable opposing voices. Alya's opinion about "women and Woman" becomes part of this technique, instead of being merely an opinion Shklovsky discards. As I have discussed previously, Zoo allows the reader to arrive at several interpretations of Shklovsky's self. The crossing out of Alya's letter may serve a similar purpose.

At some points in the text, Shklovsky does stereotype women as demanding and materialistic. However, Shklovsky's self is dispersed: he can play many roles. It may be only Shklovsky the anguished lover who says such a thing at some particular moment, not the "whole" Shklovsky. Shklovsky might want to hint that he rejects Alya's attempt to differentiate Woman from women. Nevertheless, by crossing out the letter and making it readable, Shklovsky allows himself to be mocked for doing so and for discarding such an opinion. So, to decide that Shklovsky disagrees with Alya's attempt would be misguided. His position remains unclear.

Alya's letters are no less complex or manipulative than Shklovsky's. She asks Shklovsky not to write about love. However, while forbidding him to write about love, Alya's letters are affectionate. She tells him what she is doing in detail: "I'm writing in bed. . . . Now I'm going to take a bath" (15). These details encourage the addressee to get involved with her daily activity. Moreover, the words "bed" and "bath" connect to something private, which produces a kind of intimacy. The letter ends by giving him hope: "Perhaps we'll see each other today" (15).

The reader is left with doubts as to whether Alya's affection for Shklovsky is politeness, friendship, or intimacy. Her third letter is also quite warm. Calling Shklovsky "Dear little Tatar", Alya thanks him for the flowers and shows that she loves them: "The whole room is saturated with their fragrance; I hated so to leave them that I didn't go to bed" (31). Like her second letter, her third ends with intimacy: "I kiss you, I sleep" (31). Her fourth one begins with intimacy again: "My dear, I'm sitting on the divan you don't like and thinking how very nice to be warm, comfortable and in no pain" (59). It continues with "I'm all curled up" (59). Like the words "bed" and "bath", the words "sleep", "divan" and "curled up" have personal implications and in a way, provide erotic connotations.

Alya's letter in "Letter Nineteen" is again connected to her private space, since it is written when she is sick. She still informs Shklovsky about sleeping: "Now I'm going to sleep" (73). After telling him about how lovely Stesha is, she ends the letter warmly: "I kiss you, my dear. If only I don't get sick! Now what made me inflict Stesha on you?" (74). After a long description of her admiration and her love for Stesha, Alya suddenly relates Stesha to Shklovsky. In her last letter, however, Alya again asks Shklovsky not to write about love. Consequently, there is an ambiguity as to whether Alya really rejects Shklovsky's love or whether she is flattered by it and thus tries to create a little bit of intimacy in telling him about her private space and Stesha. Alya might not love Shklovsky, but she loves his love and adores his adoration. This makes her play a game of pulling and throwing the string.

For Shklovsky, the complexity of Elsa's letters may be another way to express what he thinks about the nature of the split self. Elsa is only the embodiment of a metaphor for Alya, just like Alya becomes

the "realization of a metaphor" for Shklovsky's anguish and loneliness in a foreign country. Since Elsa is an object of art, the artistic perception of her is more important than Elsa herself. The "real" Elsa Triolet might not be found in Alya, just as the "real" Alya might not be found in Shklovsky's text. This makes the interpretation of the self of Shklovsky's addressee(s) in the text debatable.

Conclusion.

Shklovsky's theory of defamiliarization suggests that intertextuality in the text cannot be avoided. Intertextuality in Shklovsky's Zoo, or Letters Not About Love becomes another means of highlighting the problem of interpreting the self in letter writings. While Shklovsky is known as the originator of the theory of defamiliarization, his theory can be traced back as far as Ovid's theory of love. The process of intertextuality is never-ending: a text is the subject as well as the object of intertextuality.

Intertextuality also affects the self. One's self is always in intertextual relation with the other's. As a consequence, Shklovsky changes his representation of himself depending on his addressees. When trying to seduce Alya, Shklovsky writes as a devoted lover. When writing to the All Russian C.E. Committee, on the other hand, he denies his love for Alya and becomes a devoted Russian. This demonstrates that one's self is never wholly authentic, but the result of re-production. Consequently, while writing to Alya, Shklovsky never knows the "real" Alya, just like Alya never knows the "real" Shklovsky. Both merely presuppose the other's self.

Intertextuality in the text makes the definition of the genre of the self and the text ambiguous. Defining the self in Shklovsky's text

becomes problematical. This indicates that Shklovsky rejects the idea of the "essence" of the self. Shklovsky's descriptions of Russia and Berlin seem to manipulate his love letters. However, his love letters appear to mask his loneliness in Berlin and his criticism of the condition of Russia. So, there is still doubt whether his text is love letters or non-love letters. In blurring the genre of the text, Shklovsky defamiliarizes the reader's expectation of the definite interpretation of the text and the self.

The intertextuality between "fact" and fiction makes the interpretation of the self more complicated. Shklovsky fictionalizes his own existence by making himself the object of his theory of defamiliarization and undercuts the reader's expectation of the "real" self. Shklovsky writes: "It turns out that between a given point and a straight line, one can draw several perpendiculars" (132). While seemingly one, things can be several and vice versa. The definition of the self then cannot be absolute.

Like Shklovsky's self, his addressee's self becomes confusing as well. Alya is the embodiment of one aspect of Shklovsky's self: she is "the metaphor" for his loneliness in Berlin. Alya, as Shklovsky writes, "never existed" (103), but is the object of Shklovsky's artistry. This means that while writing to Alya, Shklovsky also writes to literature and makes Alya the object of his writing. Alya's self is in intertextuality with Shklovsky's, the public reader's, culture, society, literature, and with "fact" and fiction. Because Alya is only a metaphor, Kauffman's statement that Alya is "down to earth" becomes questionable. Kauffman's judgement of Alya's self becomes too decisive in view of the indefiniteness of the text and the self.

Thus, Shklovsky's application of his theory of defamiliarization in Zoo ensures that the text is a literary object. This means that what is

written is a modification for the sake of the artfulness of the object. This deflects the expectation of finding the "real" self in the text. Emphasizing the intertextual nature of the text and self is one of Shklovsky's techniques to defamiliarize the reader's presumption of a definite self in the text. Consequently, since a text is always "an *intersection of textual surfaces* rather than a *point* " (Kristeva, 1986; 36), the interpretation of the self in the text cannot be determined.

Chapter III. Reconstituting the self in The New Portuguese Letters or The Three Marias.

Another epistolary text which I will discuss is The New Portuguese Letters or The Three Marias. The text is written by three women named Maria: Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa, who were all educated by nuns. All the writers of The New Portuguese Letters were married and mothers of sons. The three decided to meet once a week and write to each other. Their project, as Helen R. Lane describes it, was "to examine their similar problems as women and as liberal writers" (8). They based their text on The Portuguese Letters (1667-8), which was written by a Portuguese nun, Mariana, who was seduced by a cavalier and abandoned. Like Zoo, The New Portuguese Letters is another example of intertextuality because it is influenced by Mariana's letters. The Marias write not only to each other but also to Mariana, to the cavalier, to men and to the public reader. Starting with an ellipsis: " . . . Granted, then, . . ." (13), the text also invites the assumption that it is connected to something prior, which stresses the intertextuality of the text.

Soon after The New Portuguese Letters was published, it was banned and all copies of it were confiscated. All three women (one of them was tubercular) were imprisoned. They were accused of "'abuse of the freedom of the press'" and of being an "'outrage to public decency'" (7). Their trial began in October 1972 and extended until Spring 1974. However, the trial ended suddenly when all charges against the three writers were dropped, possibly because of international feminist pressure on the Portuguese government.

One of the reasons for the ban on the text was that it contains a protest against the negative view of women. In the text, the three writers complain about the false prejudice against women and about the effort of shaping women's selves by repressing women's feelings, desires and passions (including their sexual passions). They emphasize the theme of colonization from The Portuguese Letters by telling how the cavalier who comes to Portugal colonizes not only the land but also the woman, Mariana. As a result, in a Catholic country which put a lot of rigid restrictions on women, the three Marias' writing was seen as pornographic and rebellious.

Just like Heloise's letters and those of Ovid's heroines, the Marias' letters can be considered as love letters because they revive their memory of the injustice done by the other (the man). Their letters of woman's suffering and man's ungrateful behaviour are reminiscent of those of Mariana. Mariana writes to the Chevalier: "From the first moment I saw you my life was yours, and somehow I take pleasure in sacrificing it to you"; however, the Chevalier "has crossed the sea to escape" her and "give[s] no thanks" (Guilleragues, 1972; 324). Mariana's letters become a product of her memories of the Chevalier. Reviving the memory of Mariana's lament, the three Marias write how women are robbed of their property for nothing: "They take me for taken/ within me I trade them/ my breast and my convent/ for nothing" (65). In emphasizing how women have sacrificed a lot for men, the three remind men of their debt to women.

Like the previous love letters, the Marias' letters become the lament for the neglect of the assumed contract between two lovers. The three writers question the myth of love which demands that women sacrifice themselves while waiting for the empty reward. For them, love is another kind of trade: "vengeance is part of love" (29).

While the three were arrested because of their transgression of the law in Portugal, and many critics discuss the transgression in their text, their transgression of the law is in a way a search for another law. Like other deserted female lovers, they try to question the contract between themselves and the other (the man).

For this reason, the Marias blame men for the injustice done to women: "All rights of possession belong to males" (125). Quoting from an article *The Woman and Work,* the three writers show how "it is jokingly said that 'woman is man's last colony'" and argue that this statement "is indicative of the fact that the professional status of women is still subject to numerons inequalities" (235). Man's perception of woman's self becomes an "invasion" (91). Society's attempt to shape women's selves into certain patterns makes some women believe that their life is "a solitary, painful, furtive act, hidden from the eyes of everyone in the name of modesty" (152). The three show how man's oppression makes women ensure that other women are always repressed; a girl tells how: "My mother said that the flesh is sinful it is lustful and that's the way it was even with you. You were always a prison" (159).

The Marias state that man's judgement of women is mistaken: the three reject "any man who creates a false image" of women (76). They try to discard the "confusions and fears which cause women to abstain from friendship with each other" (91). They want to bring about collaboration among women by trying to identify with each other for support: "Let all us women love one another as the three of us love each other for being orphans suffering the same deprivation" (54).

Because of the "false image" of women, the three aim to search for an original self for women: they express their intention "of

knowing ourselves, of discovering ourselves, on the journey through ourselves" (15). They write that their book "is the *written record* of a much broader, common, lived experience of creating a sisterhood through conflict, shared fun and sorrow, complicity and competition" (321). So, The New Portuguese Letters demonstrates the Marias' desire to reconstitute woman's self, which has been so manipulated. The text implies that in order for the Marias to come up with the "original" self, they have to question man's authority over women and the classification of women's selves by man, both of which have contaminated the "originality" of woman's self.

Some critics seem to be certain of the Marias' effort to discard man's image of women and the Marias' attempt to define woman's self. In Going Too Far, an American feminist, Robin Morgan, states that the three Marias "are feminist artists writing passionately on the condition of women. And their persecutors, coincidentally, are all men" (Morgan, 1974; 205). Morgan also argues that the three Marias' writing explores "the exploitation of our sexuality and the denial of our own fulfilment as whole human beings" (Morgan, 1974; 203). Robin Morgan praises the three for disclosing man's manipulation and for speaking up with "the truth" for women:

> The Three Marias stand in a long and honorable tradition of women - women artists in this case - who have been repressed, persecuted, prosecuted, or killed, overtly or covertly, for daring to speak our *truths* [my italics]. This process is how the history of women, like that of other oppressed peoples, has been hidden, and how we have been robbed of our culture (Morgan, 1974; 207).

The three Marias, however, question their own perception of men and of woman's self. For this reason, while they state how woman's self is manipulated by man, they question their effort of searching for the true or original woman's self. In stating that their search for themselves in writing is always in "accordance with the rules of the time and the place" (302), the three Portuguese women admit their limitation of perception. This obstructs their desire to define woman's original self. Their writing, accordingly, is full of contradictions. While trying to discard man's authority, they insinuate another sort of authority. While they look for originality in woman's self, their self is in intertextuality not only with each other but also with man, which shows that there is no "original" self. The New Portuguese Letters becomes another text which illustrates the problem of interpretation of the self. Trying to search for woman's true self, the three Marias end up in a labyrinth of confusion.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I discussed how the process of manipulation in the text created problems for the revelation of the self in a collection of letters. In the second chapter, I showed how intertextuality produces an ambiguous interpretation of the self. Ultimately, what counts is our own perception: if we become the observer or the reader of the other's behaviour, how conscious are we of the other and of our own selves? In this chapter, I will demonstrate how manipulative our perception is. The act of revelation of the self becomes another kind of manipulation and the attempt to define a "true" or "original" self becomes impossible.

Consequently, if I argue that there is no true or original self, by analogy, there will be no true or original writing either. This last chapter, in a way, makes a mockery of my thesis. While I talk about the manipulation of perception, my perception is manipulated as well,

which means that my argument about the manipulation of perception may itself be affected by manipulation. Thus, trying to explain the problem of interpretation of the self, my thesis becomes a problem itself.

The death of the author and the birth of the reader?

The three writers state how man controls woman's self: "woman does not have a culture of her own. She exists in a culture where power belongs to men, and therefore, within this culture, she is alienated" (235). For this reason, the three Marias write about a girl who has been intimidated by man's ideology. The girl writes in her composition: "There are two kinds of duties: men's duties and women's duties. Men's duties are to be courageous, to be strong, and to exercise authority" (237). In this case, since men have control over women, men become the authors of women's identities. So, in order for the three to have a chance to reconstruct woman's self, they attempt to discard man's authority: the three refuse "to be cloistered" by man (29).

The Marias write: "It is time to cry: Enough. And to form a barricade with our bodies" (262). For the three Marias, The New Portuguese Letters becomes a means of searching for a common experience as women. The three become the readers of man's perception of women, and they imply that they are rebellious readers who will kill the author: each is "a woman ridding herself of the image of the woman created by men" (45). They try to validate their theme of writing about the oppression of women by comparing their own experiences not only with each other but also with Mariana's, as they

ask "What difference is there, then, between Mariana's time and ours?" (114).

While writing about women and their oppression, the three Marias are worried that their sons will become "little tyrants" (110). However, they swear that their sons "will never be our way of asserting ourselves or our only work in the world: we shall refuse to allow them to be the bridges of our longing or our dissension" (85). Instead of using their sons as their tools, the three Marias exercise their passions - to break the identity imposed by society, to get rid of the man's manipulation, to free women from oppression - in writing. Refusing to be authorized by man, they want to be the authors of their own bodies and to give their bodies a new identity: "what I want most is for whatever talent I have at writing to take on a new meaning" (87). One of their aims is that "With the greatest precision, the hand above the paper sets down ideas in a letter that we write" (14).

Writing, as Helen R. Lane states, becomes the three Marias' tool for "their need to reform social patterns in their country" and "the need to put an end to the many forms of discrimination that women suffer in both their public and private lives" (8). Thus, while Mariana takes writing as her comfort in order not to be destroyed by her sorrow, the three Marias write in the hope of expressing themselves and their problems.

However, while seemingly confident about expressing their intentions in writing, the Marias question their own assurance and imply the arrogance of their ambition to resolve woman's condition through their writing: "this great dull pain which is only slightly lessened by writing about it, and hence I'm lying when I say that writing resolves things" (35). While writing becomes a medium for

expressing their intentions, it also becomes an obstruction to such intentions.

They compare their writing to that of Mariana, who "will lie about love so seriously and so beautifully that any man who desires you can only thank you for the favours you have granted him and gallop off into the sunrise, toward the quintessentially real" (37). Writing becomes nothing more than an exercise which cannot solve their problems nor portray their "real" intentions. They will never be able to reach "the greatest precision" (14); as one of the Marias writes: "The mind invents lies as it writes. And so I feel that writing to you (to each of you, to myself) is always a lesser good" (35).

Some readers or critics, nonetheless, try to judge the writer through his/her writing, in the hope that the writing reveals the author's real self. The three Marias cannot avoid the reader's endeavour to define the Marias' selves through their writing. Because of their writing, the three are judged by many men: "A man who knows the three of us (who is suspicious of us) said that our project might be the death of us" (53). Some men consider the Marias' selves "indecent". One of the Marias notes how people comment: "'What monsters you three are!'" (53). She also writes how "[o]ut of fear they even call us lesbian because they are unable to lay their hands on our bodies" (54). The three Marias laugh at these prejudices and judgements of their selves throughout their writing.

They write: "Anyone who writes omits certain things and dwells on others, in accordance with the rules of the time and the place, retouches his or her self-portrait to make it more attractive" (302). The three deflect people's expectations of being able to decide the author's self from his/her writing with their inconsistency: while they state that writing helps them to project their intentions, they also imply that

writing creates its own identity. Thus, writing is not merely controlled by the author.

Kauffman's argument that "For the three Marias, the revolt lies in the telling, putting into words" (Kauffman, 1986; 292) is too simple since the three writers' words cannot portray all of their intentions. In his theory of "différance", Derrida explains that our perception cannot avoid "temporization" and "spacing" (Derrida, 1982; 9). Since our perception is mediated through space and time, the process of delay and detour is unavoidable. Thus, we never perceive the "real" thing but only the projection or the impression of that thing. Consequently, the three have to undergo the process of différance in their writing. To write is to transpose something into another space and time, the space and the time of writing. This makes the Marias' writing incapable of being the "real" expression of their intentions.

In the middle of their writing, for instance, they reflect on what they have gained from it. At that point, they comment: "We have arrived at the halfway point of ourselves" (111). However, they doubt what they get out of it: "Perspicacity? Insecurity? An ambiguity deliberately fostered, out of necessity" (111). Their questions, presumably, indicate that writing does not make the problems of gender and self clearer. The delay and deferral of their perception cause a lot of uncertainty when they try to convey their intentions in writing; as one of the Marias asks: "What is it, then, that is freeing me from my lonely freedom that is gradually revealing to me what one of us thinks of thinking, of the exercise of passion as a search for effectiveness and a meaning for our lives, while another of us prattles, recounts her experiences, talks seeming nonsense" (36).

Because of delay and detour, our reaction to something is often a reaction to something that has happened in the past. In the epistolary

tradition, this différance is made clear as the addressee reads the letter after it has undergone a long process (after the letter has been written, rewritten and sent): the letter has to travel from space(s) to space(s) and time to time before arriving at the addressee. So, when the addressee receives the news from the addresser, that information has occurred in the past.

This discrepancy makes the view of the other the result of interpretation: the addressee cannot experience the addresser's experience. So, while the three Marias try to achieve the same direction in collaborating with each other, they cannot avoid the barrier which creates differences and gaps between them: "The mutual surrender of ourselves that we consented to: then our refusal, the sudden coldness of our relations with others, our reserve, our hauteur" (111). Therefore, the several voices in the text at times contradict each other. The three Marias criticize society and men, as well as each other. This makes the text dialogical, as they state how the different voices are mixed up in the text: "all three of us think and talk together, each of our paths already crossing and crisscrossing as we try our best to fall into step with each other" (36). The result is a text which has no closure.

Writing in such a way, the three writers show the open-ness of the interpretation of the text. The text can be interpreted in various ways so that the interpretation of the reader may at times be very different from the intentions of the writer. The different genres of writing (letter, poems, puzzle, word play, and fragments), which make their epistolary text seem macrocosmic, suggest the open-ness of the interpretation of the text. The boundaries between letters as literature and literature as letters become blurred, as they write: "all of literature is a long letter to an invisible other, a present, a possible, or a future

passion that we rid ourselves of, feed, or seek" (13). Hence, just as Shklovsky states, letters become the product of art which cannot avoid the modification of the self.

In parallel, the interpretation of the self in the text cannot be assured. The interpretation of the self also depends on the position of the observer. This subjects the definite judgement of one's self to disintegration. One's self may change from day to day, hour to hour or even minute to minute. Hence, a text has the possibility to become like a letter which does not reach its destination. This fear is expressed by the three as they quote Guimaraes Rosa: "'All I know is that there are too many mysteries surrounding books and those who read them and those who write them. . . . Often, nearly always, a book is a far bigger thing than what we are'" (323). Concerning this way of reading, Barthes states that literature is "an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases - reason, science, law" (Barthes, 1977; 147).

Barthes's metaphor of "anti-theological activity" for the refusal of a definite and authoritative voice can be compared with the Marias' text. The three writers' satire of Catholicism indicates that they question the authority which imposes a fixed definition of woman's self. The authority of Catholicism, which has been a great influence in Portugal, makes woman's self dependent on men since women are created from "Adam's rib" (90). Women are portrayed as either the temptress or the virgin: the wiles of Eve and the masochism of Saint Mary become the models for women:

> From the beginning men were obliged to look upon themselves as demigods fallen from divine grace through the wiles of women; and then later they were obliged to invent a way to redeem themselves through

> the womb of a new mother, that saint, that creature capable of knowing God in her womb and incarnating therein the saviour-god whose life and exemplary deeds would one day cause him to be known. . . as the son of man (153).

Refusing authority and unity, the Marias doubt the existence of " a male God" who has "a son and not a daughter to die in this world to redeem our sins which are many, and in the hour of his death He said 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'" (237). In parallel, their trialectic is not dominated by males (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but consists of the three women making "each of ourselves the mother and the daughter . . . and sisters" (107). This reflects their attempt to reconstitute a new self for women: a self which is not controlled by man's authority.

The Marias' refusal of a fixed control is also manifested as they criticize the law, another form of authority. The Marias quote the laws imposed by some countries and stress the injustice done to women by those authorities. While women taken in adultery are still stoned to death today in Afghanistan and in Saudi Arabia, the Marias ask whether the adulterous man is likely to be treated similarly. In some countries, women are punished indirectly by a "strange sort of 'death penalty'" which pushes them to have illegal abortions.

In Portugal, women can be destroyed merely because they "*appear in the public eye* and talk 'like a man'" (259). In addition, the three state that Portuguese women "are not purely and simply 'slaves' of men, since they act out their role of female object 'cheerfully' and with conviction" (259). Moreover, they criticize the working conditions which give women the jobs that men do not want to do any more and with less payment: "because [the jobs] are backbreaking and pay very badly, they are becoming woman's work" (217).

The three women's criticism of authority is similarly made clear as they quote the Portuguese penal code. The law allows men to murder their adulterous wives for degrading their honour "with the full sanction of law, with the agreement, the approbation of an entire society that complacently condones this crime" (263). Women can have legal recourse only if their husband's concubine lives under the same roof. Moreover, they cannot act in the name of their honour, but only in the name of "established morality" (263). At the same time, the three Marias are prosecuted since they violate "established morals".

For these reasons, Kauffman argues that the three writers "write without authority" (Kauffman, 1986: 287). Furthermore, their unsigned letters, according to Kauffman, are intended to "subvert the hierarchies of authorship and mastery" (Kauffman, 1986; 287). However, are Kauffman's statements true? Does this mean that in the text there is no authority at all?

Kauffman's statements can be too one-sided as the three Marias still express the desire to have some sort of authority. While refusing man the authority over woman's self, the three imply that they themselves demand such an authority. Trying to discard man's stereotypes of women, the Marias try to take the supremacy of the cavalier to mount the horse, they see themselves as "brazenly stripping ourselves of our habits . . . and riding life bareback, as though we were males" (29). Their desire for power is evident as they say: it is "we [women] who are warriors" (42-43). Taking the male role (the cavalier's role of mounting the horse) to prove their rejection of the role imposed by men, they more or less imitate men. This means that their actions do not get rid of the authority but are only directed at establishing another sort of authority.

The three writers, nevertheless, still have control over the representation of Mariana. In addition, they sign their letters at the end of the book, which suggests that they still expect to have the authority of the author. Moreover, throughout the book, it is implied that they work at the conception of woman's authority. In one of the letters, for instance, they complain that "a woman's only role is to give birth and to remain stillborn herself" (81). One of the poems in the text shows their desire to be acknowledged as they mention their hope about a place where "nothing grows there that is not born. . . whereby I know no longer how to be masked" (55). The desires to be born and to be acknowledged imply their expectation of originality and authority.

Hence, their exclusion of authority becomes another way to create another sort of authority, and their murder is another kind of birth. That they still long for some sort of authority is also manifested when they write: "Let our dialectic of women-born-and-raised-in-the-urban-middle-class-of-this-society-whose-values-we-are-all-too-familiar-with-and-hence-sympathize-with-all-exploited-classes-and-groups-with-the-heart-felt-feeling-of-belonging-to-the-exploited-group-'women' come out in print then" (303).

While, as Kauffman states, the three writers try to discard the authority of the author, their desire for an authority is still implied in their wanting to "come out in print". The Marias' desire for "women" to "come out in print" seems to influence writers like Robin Morgan. Morgan writes in "International Feminism: A Call For Support Of the Three Marias": "Listen, then to the inexhaustible, uncontainable words of the Three Marias. Different voices speak them, but they sing for all of us [women]" (Morgan, 208).

On the cover of the text, it is noted how the Marias' text influences the reader: "Today *New Portuguese Letters* remains as

fresh and challenging as when the cause of the Three Marias first lit a flame of international protest by women and for women" (Cover of The New Portuguese Letters). That the three women provoked opposition from the Portuguese government, shows that their writing has an influence on the other. Since it has some effect on the reader, writing then is not what Barthes describes as "that neutral, composite, oblique space" (Barthes, 1977; 142).

So, is the author dead? No, the author is not completely dead. S/he just undergoes a detour. The influence of the author is still in his/her text, and his/her text influences the reader, even though it has been interpreted, and re-created. In parallel, while the other's self is not absolute and cannot be decided clearly, it does not mean that it is meaningless and can be abolished. The other's self is never dead. Therefore, while the Marias state: "That is why we divorced ourselves from you males, and refused your support" (49), their selves cannot be entirely independent from man. Although they are trying to reject man's authority over women, man's self is still part of their identity as they try to be a person whom the other refuses. All the "transgressions" they make are yet incorporated through the other. For this reason, the three Marias write: we "separate from the others and so close" (41). The inseparability of one from the other which one refuses is also demonstrated in one of the Marias' poems. In this poem, it is told how a girl who tries to refuse the other's manipulation over herself and searches for her own self, ends up with the identity of the other: "as I overcome you/ and mount you and increase you/ ardently I am you" (267).

In spite of that, Barthes tries to exclude the author's self by giving "one place where [the] multiplicity is focused" (Barthes, 1977; 148) merely to the reader. He also states that "The Author, when believed

in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and *after"* (Barthes, 1977; 145). However, the past is never merely dead and finished. As Derrida states:

> It is because of différance that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called "present" element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element (Derrida, 1982; 13).

In this case, one's self (the past) influences the other (the present) who, in turn, is capable of influencing the other other (the future).

In parallel, while I stated in the previous chapters that the self of the author cannot be defined from the text, it does not mean that the author's self can be discarded. Indeed, the self of the author cannot be defined from his/her writing because of différance. Indeed, because of différance we may not be able to sum up the knowledge that the present will definitely be the retention of the past and that the future will be the production of the present. Yet, the living present cannot be independent from the past; one cannot be separated from the other. Neither past nor present can be original. The past cannot be defined since it undergoes différance, but that does not mean that it disappears. The past always haunts the present. The texts I read have some influence on me. I cannot be exactly the same person as I was before reading the texts. While the texts I have read (the past) influence me (the present), the thesis I am writing will influence the other reader (the future).

Both author and reader have a place in writing and reading. Both are influencing and influenced by the other. As Jean-Paul Sartre states:

"we can not [sic] act without being acted on" (Sartre, 1984; 324). The reader is in some ways led by the work of the author, whereas the author is manipulated by the interpretation of the reader. When we read, we base our interpretation of what we read on our experience, our space. Nonetheless, this space is intruded on by the experience of the writer, by another's space.

Derrida argues: "[o]ne is but the other different and deferred, one differing and deferring the other. One is the other in différance, one is the différance of the other" (Derrida, 1982: 18). Since our perception is being deferred and differed, it belongs to the past as well as present: while the present is influenced by the past, the perception of the past is influenced by the present as well. In other words, we live in the past as well as the present. Because of that, the author and the reader are "dead" as well as "alive". The selves of reader and writer are intruding as well as being intruded on by each other so that they cannot be separated clearly into before and after.

Barthes's statement in "The Death of the Author" that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (Barthes, 1977; 148) becomes questionable. The positions of author and reader are interchangeable. When trying to write about woman's self, the three Marias have to be readers as well, they have to be the reader of other women's bodies and identities, and of man's perception of woman. In writing to each other and emphasizing their reading of another text (The Portuguese Letters), the Marias blur the position between the reader and the author: reading is also an act of rewriting. If reading is an act of rewriting, then a reader can also be seen as an author. If, as Barthes says, the reader must survive, the author must be alive as well. The selves of author and reader influence each other. Nevertheless, because of différance, the selves of both become

indefinite. Thus, while the three Marias try to discard man's authority to come up with their "original" identity, they also express their doubt of such an ambition. The self cannot be original. Since the selves of reader and author are interdependent but cannot be defined, I assume that both are half dead and half alive.

Finding the "true" and "original" self.

The three writers' questioning does not stop only at the dichotomy between the author and the reader, the Marias state: "[A]nyone who thinks makes distinctions - you or me, either/or" (298). The classification of the self in terms of dichotomies - that is higher and lower, colonized and colonizer, and black and white - still seems to be the common view. The three Marias write how women and blacks are opposed to men and white into higher and lower position: "Women - and blacks" are inferior to "white men" (217).

Another dichotomy which is used to control women is that between body (woman) and mind (man). As Elizabeth Grosz states:

> mind is rendered equivalent to the masculine and body equivalent to the feminine (thus ruling our women a priori as possible subjects of knowledge, or philosophers). . . . Patriarchal oppression. . . justifies itself, at least in part, by connecting women much more closely than men to the body and, through this identification, restricting women's social and economic roles to (pseudo) biological terms (Grosz, 1994; 14).

The doctrine of dualism in Cartesian thought, Grosz writes, is used to justify the oppression of women as the body. This doctrine relates mind to consciousness and considers that consciousness "can be sure

about its own self-certain existence" and that consciousness is positioned "outside its body" (Grosz, 1994; 7).

The Marias' text illustrates how the idea of dichotomy becomes one of the ways to manipulate woman's self. Such an idea results in women being classified as lower by society, so that men have more rights over women. The three Marias question the existing classification of woman's self which has been manipulating the one considered "original".

In their text, the three Marias show how the positioning of women into the dichotomy of gender occurs from conception: "Lady Mother I know I was/ in your womb/ engendered" (57). The unborn baby is situated in its body and the womb. In addition, its body is encoded in the social setting (the society's idea of gender: male - female). Hence, while a body is in the space, the body becomes a space as well.

Furthermore, one's body is capable of trying to forge its space to another's. The three writers give an example of a father who tries to determine the body of his daughter. After raping his own daughter, the father still tries to impose his view by making her feel guilty for his abuse of her body: he says, "'It was all your fault. You know that you were the one to blame for everything'" (141).

The father's treatment of his daughter can be compared to that of the colonizer's treatment of the colonized. The colonizer usually does not only rob the colonized of his/her property but also forces the colonized to accept the colonizer's view and if necessary, mystifies it. Trying to define the space of his daughter, the father attempts to mystify his own body by drawing an ultimate distinction between his own body and his daughter's: "'I'm a man. I'm a man and you're provocative, perverse. . . . A woman with no modesty, no shame. . . .

I'm a man, my little whore'" (141). This shows that one is able to create one's space by defining the other's space. Opposing her body to his body as "a man", the father gives himself the privilege of having control over her space by "raping" her: being a "woman with no modesty and no shame" and a "whore", the daughter cannot even be "raped" because she has forfeited the right to refuse. In addition, calling his daughter a "woman", the father denies her position as "his daughter" and thus justifies his incest.

The three Marias write how the oppression of men makes women feel that their body is a trap: "the prison, the body" (300). According to the Marias, men try to occupy women's bodies by "staring off into space" (151). In spite of that, women remain submissive: "Our life, then, delivered into men's hands, but still we women are prepared to make mistakes that are regarded as deserving the death penalty" (114).

The influence of men over women shows that one exists as a body known not only by one's self but also by the other. Hence, as I discussed in Zoo, one validates his/her experience through the other. Thus, we live inside as well as outside our body. This makes the boundaries between inside and outside, one's self and the other indeterminate. Because of these blurred boundaries, any definition of the space of our body becomes vague. Our self then can be negotiated.

That a classification of the self can be negotiated is implied in one of the stories in the text. Mariana A. is considered insane by her in-laws and locked up with a dog. Her sudden hysteria is interpreted differently by the hospital, however. Based on a standard of normality different from that assumed by Mariana's in-laws, the hospital produces another position for Mariana's self. Mariana's insanity is

explained as a "serious nervous imbalance" and they even state that "Mariana A. is not insane" (160).

The three Marias write that man's oppression of woman's body is incited by man's fear of woman's body: "male fear of the female body, the body of perdition" fuels man's effort to make himself "the mother of the woman to reorganize her very creation out of chaos, woman the power of temptation and the accomplice of disorder, a power and a scandal, the guilty conscience of man, his marginal critic, his negative image" (90). So, while men have an effect on women's behaviour, women have an effect on men's as well. In this case, while the body (women) is affected by the mind (men), the mind is also affected by the body.

Woman's reaction to the oppression of her body can also be a disagreement with the separation of mind and body: the mind cannot be separated from the body. The body is capable of producing feelings of love and hatred, and of a body image. Our mind creates our body while our body creates our mind. The mind is not free from the action of body mapping: the father maps his own body as a "man" to differentiate it from the daughter's body. The daughter's reaction is produced by the image of her body. Freud wrote: "The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego: it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface" (Freud, 1923; 26).

Therefore, the body is not merely an object or a means to an end. The body, in some ways, is capable of producing another's body, as the three Marias state: "the body of the woman, with its blood and cycles, tearing itself apart to bring forth another body, that of the child" (90). The Marias write how one's body affects the mind: "It is by way of my body that I allow passion to take possession of me: the body itself being this passion or its object, its root, its motivation, its indolence" (31),

and "only the body leads us to others and to words" (124). Thus, one's body can be one's source of feelings (anger, hatred or love) for oneself; and at the same time it can project these certain feelings to the other.

Like body, mind is never absolute. Just as Derrida states in his theory of différance that what we perceive is not the "real" thing, so consciousness should be viewed not as "the absolutely central form of Being but as 'determination' and as an 'effect'" (Derrida, 1982; 16). Neither body nor mind is any more original than or superior to the other, since both produce one another.

The indefiniteness of the mind is emphasized in the text as the three Marias question the idea of a precise memory. Time, as another form of différance, makes memories and unconscious traces of the past inaccurate. As a consequence, the dichotomy of fact and fiction becomes blurred as well. The memories and unconscious traces are often not expressed straight away but placed in reserve to be expressed later on, which means that they undergo a detour and temporization. The reserve of memory can be a means of one's defence. As Derrida argues: "the movement of the trace is described as an effort of life to protect itself by deferring the dangerous investment, by constituting a reserve" (Derrida, 1982; 18).

The story of the Mother of the Animals conveys the reserve and detour of the past. The three Marias write: "The Mother of the Animals was a woman abandoned by her tribe". She wanders in the forests and "protects them against hunters" (32). Her revenge for exile (her past) is reserved to protect herself. Such a revenge is manifested later on when she has the power to do it, when she becomes "the Mother of the Animals". However, since the past is deferred and differed, the cause of one's action cannot be clearly traced back. Indeed, différance questions the desire for the exact trace, as Derrida argues:

> The structure of delay *(Nachträglichkeit)* in effect forbids that one make of temporalization (temporization) a simple dialectical complication of the living present as an originary and unceasing synthesis - a synthesis constantly directed back on itself, gathered in on itself and gathering - of retentional traces and protentional openings (Derrida, 1982; 21).

Because the past differs from and defers itself, the present action only refers to the generalized trace of cause. By protecting the animals, at the same time the Mother of the Animals also assures the hunters of unfailing success by raping them. The retention of the past becomes unclear, as the three Marias write:

> I wonder, finally, whether her exercise for protecting the animals is nostalgia for the world or vengeance against men in the form of raping hunters: whether it is vengeance against the world or nostalgia for men that causes her to grant them success in any sort of hunting expeditions they may undertake (33).

The trace of the memory of the Mother of the Animals becomes muddled up in her action because of the detour of time. Hence, her identity becomes indefinite: is she protecting animals or not? If she is, why does she make the hunter successful?

The retention of the past also takes an important part in the three Marias' writing. The three try to construct their memory of their anger with society, their feelings to men, and their passion in writing: "More than passion: its motives; its construction. - Motives that are set into it piece by piece" (14). Nevertheless, because of différance, the past cannot be portrayed exactly. Consequently, the cause of their writing cannot be decided: whether it is a trace of hatred or love or compassion, which incites them to write, becomes uncertain. Despite criticizing man in their writing they also write: "and I thought of writing a love letter to

the man who will eventually come to be" (300). Love and hatred, just like vengeance and nostalgia, cannot be separated.

The indefiniteness of time is also suggested by the three's arrangement of their letters. They arrange their letters chronologically from 1 March to 25 October 1971. However, they juxtapose this date with opening dates from 1669 to 1800 to 1940 to the present. Therefore, although the letters are arranged chronologically, it does not guarantee the chronological perception of time. This shows that the perception of time is constructed rather than definite.

Fact and fiction, as a result, become muddled up. What we perceive is not the "fact", but only a re-presentation of the "fact". Memory cannot portray the exact past. Consequently, our construction of the self becomes ambiguous. History, which is based on memory, cannot be separated from story: "what matters more:/the history of a love?/or a love in history?/ in a story?" (73). The history of love becomes another kind of fiction since people are more interested in the imagination. Therefore, the Marias' "history of love" is considerably influenced by their imagination. Thus, the phrase "history of love" also becomes "love in history". The perception of the self then cannot be "real" but an affect.

In parallel, the three Marias express that the imposition of the inferior self on women is not the "truth" but only the legacy which is passed from generation to generation, for instance, from the mother to the daughter. While some women keep silent about the abuse of their body, they nevertheless express their repression by cursing their own daughters for the daughters' presence:

> our mother [became] man's plot on earth, Adam's superfluous rib; our mother who possessed nothing, who was hoping for a boy-child through whom her ego

> might even the score and take its vengeance, and who on seeing the girl-child that she had given birth to felt only grief and guilt for having brought into the world a creature like unto herself, with rights worth less than nothing, guilt at this girl-child's being her vengeance and her curse (91).

Consequently, "From our earliest days as suckling babes in diapers we have had no mother; no one ever told us we were wanted and needed for our unique presence" (91). Women's "interchanges with each other - and all friendship between women - has a uterine air about it, the air of a slow, bloody, cruel, incomplete exchange" (91). One's presence is always connected to the myth of gender, of being a male or female. In this case, the three Marias show that a self is never wholly "original" but always modified.

However, just like their questioning of man's authority creates some inconsistency, their discarding of the classification of the self also results in some contradictions. While the Marias imply that a self is not absolute, they still state that man's perception of woman is "false" (76), which means that they still embrace another sort of dichotomy (between true and false). In addition, while they demonstrate the indefiniteness of the self, they still express their desire to find a "true" and "original" woman's self.

In her article about The Three Marias, Robin Morgan states: "to be female and *conscious* [my italics] anywhere on this planet is to be in a continual state of rage" (202). Stating that man's ideologies are "false barriers" (205), Morgan writes that women should "open yourselves to what you as women are feeling" (208). These women's feelings and conditions are what she calls "these truths" (206). The three Marias, she writes, are writers who "speak the unspeakable" and "create our song even out of our singing" (207). Morgan seems to be sure that The

New Portuguese Letters can reflect woman's original self. Indeed, defining woman's "original" self from her writing seems to be the hope of some feminists: "women's writings must be true to life".

Similarly, the Marias express their hope to find woman's original or true self by their longing for "coming to ourselves" (41); they want "to be true to oneself" (300). The three Marias seem to be "conscious" of the manipulation of gender ideology. They state how women are "trapped by the myth of the male" (112). They write how a school girl has been shaped by an ideology of gendered roles. In such an ideology, the girl has learned to use ploys: "one of a woman's duties is to be deceptive. . . a woman has to know lots of tricks to get what she wants, because we're all weaker than men. . . we have to look out for ourselves. So one of the other duties of a woman is to be sly" (238-9). Shaped by the ideology that she should follow and serve a man, she chooses to "marry a boss some day" (237).

Nevertheless, while discussing ideology in society, the Marias are themselves circumscribed by this way of perceiving things so that their perspective is never neutral. In one of the stories, the three Marias show how manipulation seems "real", so that the one manipulated does not feel the manipulation. In that story, a sorceress is taken to a Witches' Sabbat and thinks that it is a wedding. The devil succeeds in making the Witches feel that hell is heaven and that "the fire that burns eternally was not real, but artificial" (67). The "artificial" is the "real" for the Witches. In such a manipulation, one can be happy without the knowledge that one is being deceived.

The Marias' hope of freeing women from manipulation and of defining woman's self becomes problematical. The three write in their text: "[t]he idea of dealing with persons as though they were divisible wholes is absurd, and if everyone tells us that death is absurd, how can

anyone take pleasure in locking us up inside an endless present, in fixing our final, definitive portrait?" (49). The contradiction is that while stating that men cannot pin down women into a "definite" portrait since there is nothing definite in a self, they seem to be definite about their opinion of man's opinion of them. If, as they write at one point, the manipulation is so "real", how can they claim that they still notice it? How can they be conscious of it? If gendered ideology fills the space, how can it leave room for them to have another perspective? Which statement is right in their writing? They can see manipulation only through their own perspective. As a result, their seeing becomes oriented, rather than neutral.

As is explained previously, our perception has to undergo the process of différance: the Marias cannot know their own space without any mediation. They cannot see themselves just by themselves, just like Auguste Comte states: "The eye can not [sic] see itself" (cited in Sartre, 1984; 316). Thus, consciousness has to emerge from a medium, too. In other words, consciousness is never free from unconsciousness; consciousness is an effect. The three Marias are trapped in différance; which makes everything they perceive a re-presentation, and thus manipulated. Sartre states: "we can insert ourselves into the field of instrumentality only by being ourselves an instrument" (Sartre, 1984; 324).

The problems created by writing about ideology are set forth several times in the Marias' text. While the three seem to be certain of their consciousness of man's manipulation by expressing their fear of the "terrors" of "the ambiguity and the confusion that society sows in relations between women" (91), they also question their own confidence and certainty. While they look for woman's "original" self, they also emphasize the impossibility of this desire. Although trying

to unmask the manipulation, they show the limitation of their own perceptions when describing Mariana: "you believe only in that which you find believable - you define yourself by the feeling of desire you arouse and you hesitate on this threshold of our circle" (37). Rejecting the identity imposed by society, they admit: "our true limit is time (49) , and that until the day we die we will always be far from having defined ourselves" (49).

Since the conscious is not free from the unconscious, the boundaries between one thing and the other are unclear. As I explained previously, there is no unique or original identity. The distinction between author and reader, observer and observed, subject and object becomes blurred. As a consequence, the essence of the self is in question. The Marias' endeavour to be "needed and wanted for our unique presence" (91) might seem rather equivocal since there is no completely unique being and no unique name. The idea of a proper name which incites the hope for originality and separates a unified single being from the other becomes questionable. Mariana is translated into their text, into their purpose of writing a text together. Mariana. A proper name. A word that cannot be translated. However, if we say "Mariana", do we know who she is? Is she the writer of The Portuguese Letters?

The Portuguese Letters has been the subject of discussion concerning its originality for hundreds of years. The identity and gender of the author have been an issue for centuries. J.J Rousseau, for instance, argues that the writer of The Portuguese Letters is a male. Judging that women's writings lack artistry, he states: "Women in general love no art, are talented in none, and have no genius. . . . Women know neither how to describe nor how to feel love itself. . . I

would bet anything in the world that the *Portuguese Letters* were written by a man" (Rousseau, 1889; 239).

Moreover, in their introduction to The Portuguese Letters, F. Deloffre and J. Rougeot state:

> To admit that the *Lettres portugaises* were written in a convent, by a nun with virtually no education, and no experience of the world, is to believe that spontaneity, that pure passion inspired a woman to write a work superior to that which the best minds of the greatest period of French literature could offer their public (Deloffre, 1962; p.v).

On the other hand, Nancy K. Miller points out that "La Bruyere, Laclos, Stendhal, and Sainte-Beuve are cited on the side of authenticity [of The Portuguese Letters] because women are naturally gifted for love and letter writing" (Miller, 1981; 48). So, what does the word "Mariana" stand for? Does it stand for an uneducated and illiterate nun or a very gifted letter writer?

The three Marias revive Mariana in their text. Like Zoo, where intertextuality with Heloise's letters makes Shklovsky not only identify with but also distance himself from her, the intertextuality of The New Portuguese Letters with Mariana's letters makes the three Marias create their own Mariana. They translate Mariana to enable them to write: "What are we acquiring from Mariana? Her concern? I my concern? You your concern? Our passion?" (85). This is similar to what Bakhtin writes: "Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions: it is populated - overpopulated - with the intentions of others" (Bakhtin, 1994; 294).

A proper name which signifies a unique being then is never neutral but populated by others as well. While the three Marias

identify with Mariana, they do not know the "real" Mariana. While they seem to embark on their project for Mariana's sake, their concern for her is also concern for themselves. They identify only with their own projection or creation of Mariana: "If I have sided with her, it is because I am inventing her" (85). However, they argue that their invention of Mariana is not merely the creation of an entirely different Mariana. They assure the reader that their reading of Mariana's letters is not as though her letters were mailed to the wrong addressee: they are not "veiling her in false colours"(85).

The statement of not "veiling Mariana in false colours", however, is questioned again as the Marias write: "Can that be why I defend her? Am I perhaps defending myself?" (85). They ask whether all of these statements are not merely the product of their own self-defence, whether their writing is not simply the product of their own manipulation of Mariana. The Marias' writing becomes a way of masturbation, the creation of the absent one for their fantasy. In it, they "avoid" themselves, they are "in love" (85). Believing that love is a separate enjoyment, a kind of monologue, they have to change Mariana to suit their own imagination: "I drive her to suicide, I kill her, I masturbate her" (85).

Their masturbation with Mariana as its object is also implied in the letters between Mariana and the Chevalier composed by the three Marias. This shows the Marias' imaginative re-creation of the two characters. The Marias' letters seem to echo Mariana's: "It was not you, Mariana, that I was thinking of; I was thinking only of him. Or of myself perhaps?" (165), which can be compared with Mariana's: "I discovered that it was not so much you as my own passion to which I was attached (Guilleragues, 1971; 340)". The subject and the object of the passion are not clear. The three writers show how one projects

one's own self onto the other and vice versa. There is a good deal of narcissism which is hidden in one's compassion for the other: "this undertaking of ours is not an evangelical one: quite the contrary. Christ vomited up hypocrites and ever since then (and even before) everyone has set a great deal of store by clear-cut truths, good and evil, yes and no, barriers, Maginot lines, totalitarian systems and their respective complementary polarities" (298).

This again indicates the blurring of the boundaries between the dichotomies of subject-object, inner-outer, dialogue-monologue, other-one's self. While seemingly striving for women, the Marias also strive for themselves. The other only becomes a detour for their own projection, for their own desire. The three admit that their writing about the oppression of women and their striving for women in general are at the same time their acts of masturbation and narcissism: "We also agreed that what is of interest is not so much the object of our passion, which is a mere pretext, but passion itself; to which I add that what is of interest is not so much passion itself, which is a mere pretext, but its exercise" (13).

Thus, Mariana as well as the word "woman" are translated into the three Marias' intentions. As a consequence, the translations of Mariana and "woman" are never constant and become indeterminate. At some stage, the three Marias make Mariana the colonized object and the victim of the Chevalier. At another stage, though, the three offer a different interpretation of the letters: they make the Chevalier the victim. One of the Marias writes as if she were the Chevalier, who laments his misfortune. In the letter, the Chevalier tells how Mariana's letters have received much praise and sympathy. The Chevalier himself realizes that he has only "served as the pretext and the object of writings and feelings that should never have existed,

being more the product of illusion, Senhora, than of the rigorous and austere discipline that might have been born of our love" (97). The Chevalier accuses Mariana of lack of seriousness in her relationship with him: he is used merely as an object to fulfil her fantasy.

The name "Maria" is even more complicated. First of all, it is shared by the three writers of the text. In addition, "Maria" also refers to the characters in the text. The intermingling of the words Maria and Mariana in word plays further suggests the ambivalence of the essential nature of the word "Maria". The reader is faced with many different women who speak through one name. Hence, the three Marias question the constancy of words. The Marias illustrate how words require a medium, but we are seldom aware of this medium: "When you write, words are made up of letters, and you only hear them as words in your head" (242). Words are explainable only through other words: words cannot "mean anything one by one. . . they only mean something in sentences, that is to say, when you put them together with other words" (241). The meaning of words cannot be free from certain points of view, and even the same word can have a totally different point of view as the three Marias write: "the word 'fresh' for instance. If it's used for a fruit it's good, but if it's used for people it's not" (241). Consequently, words are constantly being deferred and made different as well.

The three writers imply that words are never absolute but constructed to represent something. Therefore, the consciousness of words becomes constructed as well. This questions the idea of logocentrism, of the essence of the proper name. The word play of "Maria" and "Mariana" stresses the construction of words from letters and the interlinking among words. Maria can be Maria(Ana), can be Maina, can be "MAEANA MEANA MINHA MEIA MIA [MOTHER

ANA MY ANA MINE MEAN MY, sic]" (249). This shows that words have no absolute entity, their existence depends on their phonic differences from the other words.

Similarly, a proper name is always connected to other words as well as other proper names, so that the connotation of a proper name can be multiple. It can never be wholly original. The paradox is that while a proper name can be translated, its inconsistency and multiplicity make it difficult to translate. Since words are explainable only through other words, any translation of a word only interprets or comments on the word itself but never absolutely translates it. The paradox of language is described by Saussure: "in language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms" (cited in Derrida, 1982; 11). Thus, while "Mariana" and "Maria" can be translated, at the same time, they remain untranslatable.

The construction of words implies that expression through words is never original or conscious. For this reason, in The New Portuguese Letters, it is no longer clear what is the answer and what the problem. The Marias' writing is intended to portray their intentions and to analyze the manipulation of ideology. But while writing, they cannot escape the construction and unconsciousness of writing. This confusion is expressed when one of the Marias asks whether their writing is changing and even effacing them: "A soft moan that escapes you takes possession of me, impregnates me, transcends me and kills me: my writing" (125).

Words cannot completely translate the Marias' ideas. Just like Mariana, who repeatedly mentions her passion for the cavalier, the three Marias try to express, if not satisfy, their passion. Nevertheless,

since writing becomes merely a representation for their passion, it never satisfies them completely. The repetition and iteration of the Marias' desire in their text can be seen as another form of their frustration with writing, of the realization of différance between their passion and its fulfilment. Yet they keep expressing their desire in words.

Their problems can be compared to Minos's labyrinth and their writing to Daedalus's thread in the story of Ariadne. In that story, Minos holds a competition to solve the problem of how to run a thread through all the labyrinths of a shell. Daedalus wins it by tying a thread to an ant, and making it run through the shell. The thread, as J.Hillis Miller states is, "intricately crinkled to and fro as the retracing of the labyrinth which defeats the labyrinth but [which] makes another intricate web at the same time" (Miller, 1976; 62). Miller writes about the interchange of problem and its solution: "The thread and the maze are each the origin of which the other is a copy, or the copy which makes the other, already there, an origin" (Miller, 1976; 67-8).

Similarly, the three Marias try to analyze certain problems, but they end up creating other problems. The Marias' questions about manipulation in society become muddled, as they imply that their analysis of the problems is some sort of manipulation as well. Consequently, their desire as well as some other feminists' desire for defining woman's original self become questionable. This problem also applies to my own writing. While I refuse the idea of the definiteness of the self, I reconstitute another definiteness of the self, that is "the self with no 'essence'". In addition, while I analyze the manipulation of perception, my own perception is manipulated. I cannot write things generally and objectively since I only select examples which support my argument. Thus, my argument is subject

to omission and reproduction. My writing, just like the Marias', cannot capture the "truth".

Conclusion.

In The New Portuguese Letters, the three Marias' desire to reconstitute woman's self becomes futile. When trying to find a "true" and "original" self for women, the three find themselves confused. The text, as an effect, produces a lot of contradictions, since the Marias' statements continuously imply the opposite.

One of the Marias' attempts of reconstituting the self is to discard man's authority over woman's self. Nonetheless, the three cannot completely separate themselves from man. The Marias' endeavour to eliminate man's authority can be compared to Barthes's attempt to discard the author in "the death of the author". While Barthes argues for the death of the author and the birth of the reader, the reader is nevertheless another author, and the author is another kind of reader. In basing their text on The Portuguese Letters, the Marias stress that their writing is another form of reading and vice versa. This shows that the author and the reader influence each other. As a consequence, the identity of the reader is never truly absolute, but intruded on by the text s/he reads. Additionally, the identity of the author undergoes a detour so that his/her self cannot be defined in his/her writing. Since author and reader influence each other but can never be defined, the author and the reader are never truly dead or alive, they are just half dead and half alive.

In a different attempt to reconstitute a "true" and "original" woman's self, the three Marias refuse man's classification of women's selves. Again, the Marias' endeavour creates contradictions rather

than resolving the issue. While the three writers question the fixed dichotomies of mind and body, higher and lower, black and white, past and present which are imposed by society, they advocate another dichotomy of "right and wrong" by stating that man's perception of woman is wrong. Despite writing that the perception of the self is never absolute, the three still try to define a "true" and "original" woman's self.

However, the idea of proper name, which establishes an original self, can be disputed. Mariana, which is considered a proper name, a name that cannot be translated, is nonetheless translated in the three Marias' view. So, words cannot be free from certain points of view and their constancy is in doubt. Hence, since the meaning of words is multiplied, the Marias cannot translate absolutely but only interpret the idea of things. The Marias' analysis of ideology in their writing, as a consequence, is not free from such a detour either. In other words, while the three analyze the manipulation in the man-made-world, their analysis is another form of manipulation. Their intentions cannot be expressed wholly through writing. This creates many voices and turns the text into a labyrinth, to be traced and retraced without finding a way out.

Trying to reconstitute woman's self, the three end up in an unending confusion. This accounts for why in The New Portuguese Letters, the voice becomes dispersed. Although the three writers are eager to get rid of man's authority, they still yearn for another sort of authority. While they refuse man's manipulation, they create another sort of manipulation. While they criticize man's definite picture of woman, they themselves try to define woman's original or true self. Hence, the effort of reconstituting the self in The New Portuguese Letters becomes problematical. In analogy, my writing about *the*

problem of interpretation is nevertheless *an interpretation of the problem*.

Conclusion

While a person's "hidden inner nature" is expected to be revealed in his/her letter writing, letters are capable of hiding and manipulating the writer's self. In this thesis, I show how interpretation of the self in the epistolary text becomes equivocal. The nature of "individuality", "essence", "introspection" or "reflexive action" of the self in the three epistolary texts, The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, Zoo and The New Portuguese Letters is blurred.

In The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, the description of the self becomes so manipulated that any attempts to define the real self from the text will be unsuccessful. Despite being considered as a collection of letters, which is expected to present the "truth", the text has undergone many manipulations for hundreds of years. These manipulations come from the forgers, secretaries, interpreters, editors or even the letter writers themselves. Hence the "truth" in the letters has become made up. People who wanted their letters to be published may have pretended to be Heloise and/or Abelard. In addition, the interference of the secretary, the translator and the editor will decode the content of the letters. These manipulations and forgeries distort the representation of the self in the letters. Consequently, any hope of defining the "essence" of the self is in vain. Kauffman's classification of Heloise's and Abelard's selves as Ovidian and Platonic, respectively, also becomes questionable because of the capability of letters to manipulate the writer's self.

In Shklovsky's Zoo or "The Third Heloise", the blurring of the "truth" and "essence" of the self is emphasized by the intertextual nature of the text and the self. Shklovsky mixes fictive and "real"

letters, which blurs the boundaries between "fact" and fiction. As he is the author, as well as the editor, the commentator and one of the characters of his text, Shklovsky's roles cannot be differentiated clearly. The intertextual nature of the text and the self makes the genre of the self in the text ambiguous: is Shklovsky a lover or not? The gap between fact and fiction also becomes unclear because they are in intertextuality with each other. The absolute definition of the self as a consequence does not exist because one's self overlaps here and there with the other's.

Furthermore, our interpretation of our own self is unreliable. Our perception is mediated: we cannot see the "real" thing, but only the projection of the thing. In The New Portuguese Letters, the three Marias try to analyze man's perception of women. Concluding that man's definition of woman's self is mistaken, they try to search for an "original" woman's self. However, their effort meets many problems. Although Robin Morgan, a feminist critic, is certain of the three Marias' ability to discard man's manipulation and to reconstitute woman's self, the Marias do not write in a consistent vein. Instead, using a great range of genres and literary forms, they come to question even their own perception of the self.

This, finally, brings us to a paradox, where the end is always the beginning and the solution becomes the problem. Like the three Marias in The New Portuguese Letters, I become trapped by my own writing. While I argue about the manipulation of perception, my own perception is manipulated, so that my argument becomes unreliable. While my writing is about the problem of interpretation, it is itself an interpretation. As Epimenides, the Cretan, said: "All Cretans are liars".

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